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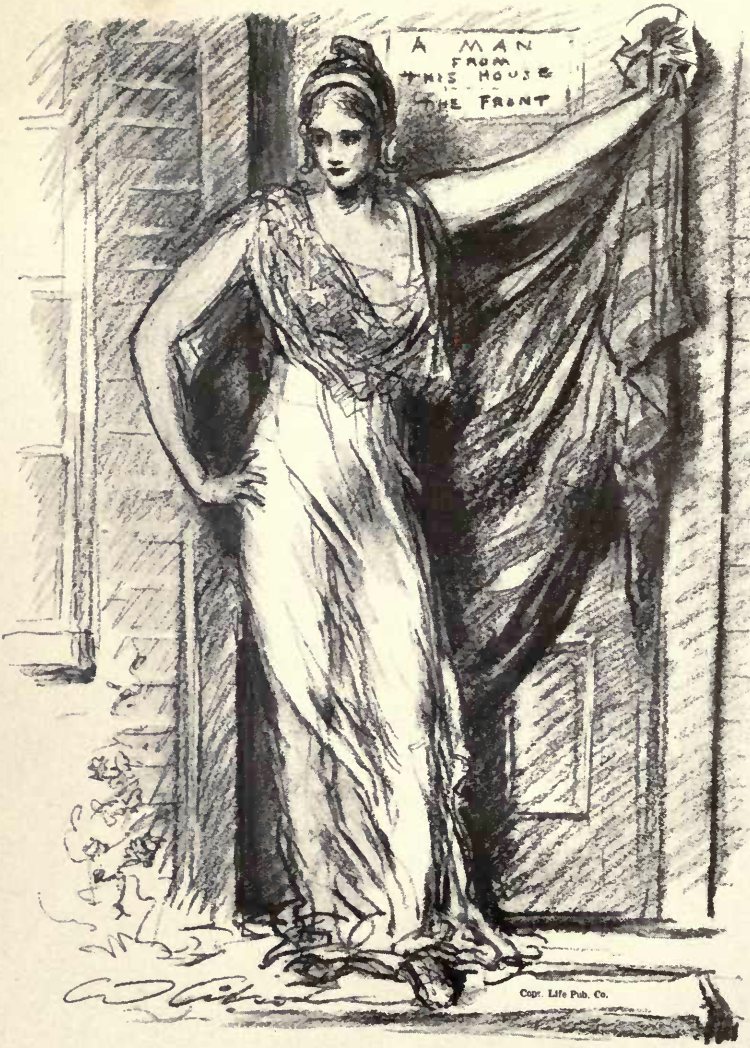
I A MAN
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Over Here

The Story of A War Bride

By

ETHEL M. KELLEY

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TURN ABOUT ELEANOR

FRONTISPIECE BY

CHARLES DANA GIBSON

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CHAPTER I

NOVEMBER

I AM eighteen years old to-day, and it's very important. I am now grown up. Yesterday I was a little girl,—technically as they say, a little girl. To-day I am anybody's equal. I could go down-town to a restaurant and order tea by myself if I wanted to. I could have done that before, of course, but I was rather on my honor not to. The difference is that I am not going to be on my honor about things like that any more. I have given notice. I shall do the sort of thing that is fitting and becoming at my age, and mother and father will have to understand that, and trust me. I shall be both discreet and worldly. Most of the official chap-

erons are nursing the French wounded anyhow, so the younger set—I am now the younger set—have to look out for themselves much more than they had to formerly when the world was not at war.

I say the world, but we are not at war, yet, thank goodness, and I don't believe we are going to be. I wouldn't have voted for the Democratic party for anything this fall, even if I had been grown up then, and women had had the vote, but I was never so thankful in my life as when I heard that Woodrow Wilson was elected. I know he's for peace. Of course war is a very beautiful and magnificent thing, and a biological necessity and all that, and the deeds the Ambulance Corps and all those other brave boys of American extraction are doing are so wonderful that I for one wouldn't have missed knowing about them for anything; still when you come right down to it war is what Sherman said it was a long time ago—simply Hades.

I wouldn't like to have anybody that I know *well* go to war. I've two cousins who are nice

stalwart boys of twenty-one and twenty-three, respectively, a first and a second cousin. I like the second cousin best, for he is very handsome, and has one of those soft thick mustaches that last for about an inch and then are shaved right close up to. I think they are very fascinating, but he—Roland—is too affectionate by nature. The other one, George, is not affectionate at all, and not even interesting. Then I know a man who was at Plattsburg last year. He is twenty-seven, and looks perfectly stunning in his uniform, but he is very grown up, and treats me as if I were indeed a small kid. He reads Kipling to me, though.

Among my birthday presents was my aunt's five dollars. She has given me five dollars on my birthday ever since the year one. (Joke.) I think I shall buy a *Plattsburg Manual* with it and also I think that I shall buy about five pounds of chocolate almonds. I don't care so much for them, but Tommy, that's my twenty-seven-year-old friend, is simply crazy about them. Soldiers, of course, are trained, among other things, to eat

and sustain themselves on chocolate, so in a way it's a service to my country to spend a part of my birthday money like that. I do want to serve my country. I do want the men I know to be soldiers and in a state of preparedness in their souls as well as their bodies. There is nothing more to be deplored than cowardice, and if any man I knew—Tommy especially—had even a touch of it I think I should cry my eyes out so they'd stay out, and I could never get them back in again; but if only Wilson or even William Jennings Bryan—whom I otherwise don't admire in any way on account of his making himself so ridiculous about grape juice and calling his wife mama and all that—will keep us from getting involved in this horrid world-struggle,—that's all I personally ask. I *am* patriotic, but I hope I shan't have to suffer for it, or have those I love in any way, suffer.

Eighteen years old; except for this small cloud of possibility, I am the happiest girl in the world. It is beautiful to be eighteen, and have everybody love one, and have one's allow-

ance increased to fifty dollars a month. I am very tall and slender and I need to be able to buy expensive drapy clothes, that look as if you had been stood up in a musical comedy and the chorus had pinned them all on you while the audience waited and the orchestra played and sang. The chorus sang, I mean. My face is not very much to look at. My features are little and my nose has a small but unmistakable hump in it, which may have been admired on ladies of the Roman Empire but looks the reverse of *chic* when it adorns a *fin de siècle* countenance. My hair again is slightly auburn, not startlingly so, but tinted that way, so I need to dress myself very carefully in order to create the kind of impression I want.

Eighteen to-day. I ought to put something down about nature I suppose, or at least, it being winter—November, 1916, to be exact—the way I feel when I get on my horse and trot about in the park, or ride on top of a bus. I ought to set down some truly spiritual feelings about emerging into womanhood from girlhood. I'm crazy about it, but otherwise I don't altogether

know what I do feel. I love to read poetry, but I hate to write anything that sounds even the least bit like it. When anybody says anything about it being a great big wonderful world I always think of that picture of the chicken hatching out of its shell. It *is* a great big wonderful world, and I am what my cousin Roland disrespectfully calls a chicken, nay, even a squab, but that seems somehow to be all there is to say on the subject.

Also, I ought to say something about my mother, and here again I pause. My mother is perfectly all right. She's an awfully good-looking person, and for her type she certainly dresses *slickly*. I tell her practically everything,—and when I say practically I mean at least, more than I tell any one else. What is home without a rubber plant and a mother? Mother is lovely,—that's all. And every girl I know thinks so.

Father is a dear, too. He is youngish like mother, and perfectly stunning to go anywhere with. Mostly he is too tired to go out, but I would rather have him along as far as sheer

looks are concerned than any boy or man I know. His hair is white at the temples, and grades up to jet black on the top of his head which makes him look very elegant and distinguished. He is not very rich, poor daddy, and I think it worries him a good deal to think that I can't have a send-off like some of the girls I know, who have houses and limousines and coming-out balls instead of living in an apartment on Central Park with one maid and a half the way we do, and a taxicab account that I'm not supposed to use except when it rains or I'm dressed for a party.

I think it distresses a business man after a while just to have to grub along and support a family without getting rich or famous or being anybody specially well known. When father was young he went to Uruguay or Paraguay or some of those countries in the South Sea Islands and had a wonderful time selling rubber stock and other exciting things like a hero in a *Saturday Evening Post* story. Now all he does is to worry for fear that the business he has will be shot to pieces under him. I don't think it ever will, but

there he is worrying about it most of the time. I am his only daughter, so I know. Only daughters are apt to look and act like their fathers, and to sympathize with them. It is the law of heredity. Mother inherits nothing from him of course, and her attitude toward such things is always very sweet, but she sees them from a Christian Science or *why worry, it will all come out in the wash* sort of angle. Mother is—well, not fat—but rather plumpishly inclined, which you'd hardly guess when she's corseted properly, and being mother she's always corseted properly;—but father and I are the thin and agitated types.

The strangest thing about men and women respectively, though, is the difference in the kinds of things they get worked up over. I am very sensitive in a way, and father is very sensitive. We both get frantically excited at times, but never at the same sort of times. Father, for instance, is in a dreadful state about this country. He says it is going to the dogs as fast as it can go,—that we're a nation of four flushers and pikers.

He says we are just now in the most cowardly position any nation could be in, smugly assuring ourselves that this big struggle is none of our business, and that we are too proud to fight, because we regard our own *convenience* as the thing of paramount importance. He says the truth is we feel ourselves too good to fight—too superior, and that we gas and windbag and send notes—the language is his, not mine—for the same reason that any individual with a streak of yellow a yard wide, talks instead of acts—looks on at the shedding of blood instead of mixing in with the fray.

Father gets perfectly melodramatic about this. Ever since the sinking of the *Lusitania* he has behaved like a man who has lost his best friend or friends, and there wasn't a soul on board that he knew personally. Of course, I felt that devastating tragedy deeply at the time it happened, there were so many young girls on board that might have had many of the same ambitions and emotions that I have, and who were or were not saved from an inky grave in the cold black

waters; but it was nearly six months ago, and I don't think you can keep looking backward all the time at anything so grim, but father is like Lot's wife. He'll freeze looking over his shoulder, I tell him.

Privately I don't blame the Administration. I wouldn't tell father that. He'd take it to heart; but President Wilson has either got to send notes all the time, or fight. Every time a submarine sinks anything of ours we might just as well write the Germans about it as anything else. There is graft everywhere. Every nation is looking out for the main chance a good part of the time. It isn't as if the Allies had always been right in everything they undertook. They haven't. The Germans, of course, have always been wrong, they never had any decency of any kind, but the other races have fought wars of conquest and aggrandizement and all that. Look at England and her colonies and the Irish question. I don't know so much about them, but I know that there has been quite a lot of scandal about her behavior. Also the French are very mean, I've been told,

and terribly on the make. Those *concierges* they have over there rob you right and left if you don't allow them to extort tips and other money from you. Eileen Douglas lived in Paris for years and she knows all there is to know from the inside. In fact there's a lot to be said for America's keeping right on being at peace with the world. When you come right down to it, American citizens ought not to travel on boats at all now that the Germans have made it impossible to do so without these tragic results.

It is only about Belgium that I mind. I can pick flaws in the Allies, but I can't say anything derogatory about Belgium. I had a little sister that died before I was born, and while I can't say that I feel specially attracted to her—she really was the flower of the family with all the angelic virtues and good looks—still there is never any time when I could say anything against her. She was my little sister, and she died. Well, Belgium—it's funny how some thoughts can make you choke right up. I've heard quite a lot about Belgium, perhaps that's the reason.

Tommy doesn't take father's view of anything exactly. He is quite a cheerful person. He doesn't worry about anything but Preparedness. He says that our getting ready to fight is the principal thing, that as soon as our boys learn to handle a gun they'll use it of spontaneous combustion if they don't get a chance any other way. He thinks the government is sort of kidding everybody along in a kind of poky way that makes you mad, but he believes that it is marking time with an object in view. He's a lawyer really, but the law is rather lost sight of in his interest in all these military things. He is teaching me setting-up exercises. There is a dandy one where you spread your feet wide apart and touch the floor first with the fingers of one hand and then the other. I do it forty times every night.

I am also doing rifle practise in a shooting gallery he takes me to. I am going into the Red Cross to learn a few little things like First Aid and the care of other wounds, and making bandages and slings. I think it is no more than right that a girl should know these details. Whatever

else I do or don't believe in I believe in Militarism.

Last night we had Tommy to dinner—invited specially by me on account of its going to be my birthday to-day, and I being perfectly sure that he would forget it. I thought I would feel pretty low about it when he did forget, though I knew he was going to. So I had him to dinner the night before to take the edge off, feeling that if I had had a whole evening of him beforehand I wouldn't care so much. Father and he talked their heads off about things like the removal of General Woods, and whether or not Tammany would ever get its head above water, and Plattsburg, and those everlasting notes.

Mother was wearing her pale gray charmeuse made over for a home dinner dress, with coral earrings. Nobody knows how I want those earrings, but I won't ask mother for them because she'd give them to me, or else she'd ever after apologize to me whenever she put them on, and I don't think it's fair to get them away from her by those means. If she didn't like them so much,

I would though. The greatest good to the greatest number is my motto. I wore my baby blue chiffon with pink rose-buds.

Miss Walerstein, my aunt's ex-sub governess, an excellent woman who had come in from the country at great inconvenience to herself and us, to see mother, had also been asked to stay. We tried to keep off the subject of the war for her sake,—mother and I did. She has a father and uncles in Germany, and also two brothers in the German army, but I think she is truly devoted to our family—too truly I feel sometimes. Thinking she might be getting uneasy in some way at father's and Tommy's festive conversation about the shock the British got and the new awakening over the battle of the Marne, I began to ask her about her own country and if it was true that more children committed suicide there than in any country in the world. She said it was a wicked lie. Then she smiled more graciously and said that only some Americans believed the worst of Germany, that we by and large were her

friends among the ravening wolves that beset her. She said Germany was clean and beautiful, and that there were wise good rules for everything there, and people always knew how to behave.

"It must have been very hard for you, Fräulein, to adjust yourself to our manners and customs," mother said sweetly to her.

"It is so. You Americans have no rules of conduct. You are like cooks who have no recipes for anything. Sometimes your cooking turns out well, and again—not."

"The French are the best cooks in the world," I said thoughtlessly; and then having gained nothing by my well-meant efforts toward our especially unwanted guest, I turned my attention to Tommy, and said anything that came into my head whenever I could find a little loophole in the conversation.

Very much later I got Tommy into my den on the pretext of showing him some snap-shots. Mother stayed and talked to Fräulein, and father had a business appointment. No one had even

chanced to mention before Tommy that to-morrow—to-day—was going to be my natal day. I had rather depended on mother, at least, to say:

"You ought to have waited till to-morrow night, Tommy, or else come again then. It's Beth's birthday, you know." But she didn't.

We had a long, long talk about infantry drill and field firing. I am intensely interested, of course, in everything that Tommy ever talks about, but here and there my mind would wander to the way I want my blue *panne* velvet dancing frock, now in the hands of the six-dollar-a-day seamstress, to set across the shoulders, and also to the very earnest look Tommy gets around his eyes when he is engrossed in any subject. I love for a man to have pink fresh-looking skin, and then to get sunburned to the very top of his collar, and below the hat line.

"Beth, are you listening?" he asked me suddenly.

"I'm not only listening, but I heard what you said," I replied glibly, and I told him what it was.

"Sometimes you get me guessing, Beth," he

said. "You know I've always thought you were the only girl I ever knew who was a real sport for sport's sake."

"To what department of life do you refer?" I said to gain a little time.

"The sporting goods department," he said gravely; "are you really interested in the things I tell you about, or do you kid me along from time to time like any other girl?"

"I am really interested in what you talk about, Tommy," I said.

"I know a darn sight too much and too little about women," he mused quite abstractedly. "I'm pretty fond of you, Baby."

"You mean you don't know whether I'm always sincere or not," I said. My feelings were very mixed. I didn't want to represent myself to him as anything that I wasn't, nor did I want to tell him the whole truth about my convictions and non-convictions. "Tommy," I added to him with all the earnestness at my command, "no girl is."

Our serious conversation was interrupted by

his whoops and peals of laughter when I said this. Usually I know it when I have said anything funny, but this time I didn't.

"The thing I want most in the world," he said quite a little bit later, "is sweetness and sincerity and at least a perfectly good sporting *instinct* all wrapped up in one piece of goods—preferably millinery. A burnt child dreads the fire, you know. I was burnt once."

I couldn't say anything, so I didn't. Tommy was engaged to a perfectly horrible woman of twenty-nine once that married a multi-millionaire of her own accord—when she might have had Tommy.

"I'm terribly afraid of getting prejudiced in favor of some—some—"

"Skirt?" I put in helpfully. When Tommy begins to talk this way he frightens me dreadfully. If his mind is beginning to run on women again I don't want to know it.

"Some skirt—before I've had a chance to appraise it calmly and carefully enough."

Soon after this he went home. "What I want

most in the world,—" that rather sticks in my crop.

What *I* wanted, did want, and am wanting now, most in the world, is a birthday present from Tommy.

CHAPTER II

DECEMBER

DECEMBER is a sort of good feeling month. I like cold weather and the tingling feeling you have as if you had had a cold shower and an alcohol rub every half-hour all day. All the setting-up exercises I do make me feel fine, too. I'd like to try some Indian wrestling some time, but I can't with a boy, and I don't know any girl who would be interested.

Well, Christmas is coming on apace. New York is just simply crammed with Allied Bazaars and Fairs and Benefits. I've sold tickets by the carload, danced in two charity shows at the Plaza, and helped run a flower booth at the Grand Central Palace for the Serbian relief. I've dressed a French wounded doll, addressed a lot of Poet's Ambulance envelopes, and Red Crossed until I fairly exhale lint, and knit and purl in my

sleep all night long. I dream I am in the woods, going fishing with Tommy, and trying to cast my line and knit at the same time; or skate and knit, or fox-trot.

Last night I dreamed that I was trying to write a love-letter and knit. I had to get to the end of my row before I could put in an endearment, and every time I dropped a stitch a big blot would come on the paper. I seemed to be begging somebody not to do something. I didn't know who at first, but it turned out later to be Tommy, who was thinking of going to France with ten Red Cross nurses. I began to cry wildly, and Tommy said, "Darling, you shouldn't be writing a love-letter to me while I'm commandeering these women." Then I woke up. Anyway he called me "darling." Aren't dreams funny things?

The air is full of war stuff, but it isn't our war. It's their war. The campaign at Verdun is rather getting on my nerves. The battle of the Somme is on everybody's lips. I hate the morning papers nowadays. All the murder cases on

the second page, and all the fashion notes dubiously headed "American Dressmakers Vie with Parisians. No Paris Gowns for American Misses," and things like that. I think I could get up more heart interest in the war if we could publish interviews from the trenches. About all the news we get is hearsay, scraps of letters from those who are fortunate enough to have relatives at the front. I mean fortunate from a news standpoint.

I know a Canadian girl, Marcella Harcourt, whose brother, and I strongly suspect her sweetheart, went over with that first contingent of Canadians. She says her brother is six feet tall and very good-looking and all the girls are crazy about him. He writes to her in the code they used when they were children. He does a whole letter of commonplace stuff to get by the censor and every fifth word is code; but she says that he works so hard to get the code message in, that the body part of his letters is not very interesting, and when they spell out the important things it is only "Ten miles east of where we were

when we first went in," and she was able to guess that anyway from other things about the letter. She doesn't say much of anything about the sweetheart, but I hope his letters are more satisfying. She thinks she is lucky that her brother and this friend—that's the way she speaks of him, but I can tell—are still alive to tell the tale. When the Canadians first went over I guess they were moved right up to the front and practically sacrificed. How can such things be? I am awfully glad that they don't seem any *realer* to me. I'd hate to have the war really affect me so I'd lose my appetite or anything. Thank goodness there are still ice-cream sodas and peach marshmellow sundaes in the world!

Yesterday I had a whole lovely afternoon rattling around the town with Tommy. He was giving himself a few hours off for rest and relaxation and to buy Christmas presents. He wanted my advice about getting a present for a girl. That was rather a facer, but I don't think he cares so very much about her. He said the girl wasn't so much the point, but the present

was. That it had to be nice and what she wanted, but that she herself needn't enter into the conversation in any way that would be embarrassing to either of us.

"Isn't she a nice girl then, Tommy?" I managed to ask.

"A very nice girl, but a trifle hypothetical,"—I can't seem to remember to look up hypothetical, much as I desire to figure out his exact meaning—"but you're a nice girl, too, and here we are walking down the avenue together. Let's talk about that."

Fifth Avenue was simply great. It was swarming and crawling with smart motors, and the air was crisp and cool. There was lots of color around, in the shop-windows and people's clothes. Just because dye stuffs are so expensive and hard to get, and everybody in London and Paris has gone into khaki-color and sackcloth color, we seem to be reveling in all the flashing, flaming shades there are. I don't care. I love it. I'm crazy for a Prussian blue velvet trimmed with squirrel, made in that straight military way.

We went into several different jewelers' shops, and finally chose a jade pendant for that disgusting girl—whoever she is. For one minute or so I was about to get her the ugliest thing I could find in New York City. I made the plan of going from one store to another until I had picked out the very worst pendant our little old town could boast. Then I thought better of it. Tommy trusted me. I chose something I coveted myself. I hope it twists around her horrid throat and chokes her some night! No, I don't. She's Tommy's friend, anyway.

Still no barest hint was made of any present for me.

I told Tommy that Lester Price sent me roses on my birthday. I didn't mean to, because it doesn't do any good to sneak anything in about the birthday now, and I don't want to do anything remotely like hinting, but I some way blurted it out, and got him started on the subject.

"Why didn't I know about the birthday?"

"You did," I said, "but you forgot,—Tommy."

"And Lester Price remembered? Well, I dare say that was as it should be. You wouldn't want roses from an old creature like me."

I couldn't say I would have wanted them when he hadn't sent me any. That would have been sort of reproachful and I-told-you-so-ish. So I didn't say anything.

"Sometimes you make me feel very old, Beth, when you put me in my place with one of your impressive silences."

"Do I?" I said.

Mother lets me have tea with Tommy, but never with any of the boys unless we're chaperoned. We went to the Waldorf, and I had chocolate and pastry and *petit fours,* which is a sort of pastry too. Tommy had milk punch, and smoked, and looked at me, and smiled. It was an elegant lark, and we stayed there for hours. I love tea, and I'm crazy about the Waldorf, though mother always goes to Sherry's.

We went home through the park in a hansom cab. It was a slick ride. All the trees were snow-laden, and the sky that cold flushed pink it gets

just at twilight. "The road was a ribbon of—" something, I don't know how the old poem goes. Our horse's hoofs rang sharply, tumty-umpty-umpty-umph. Then the lights began to twinkle out. Tommy put his arm along the cushion at my back. I don't see how anybody tells anybody else the things that are in their souls. I never should be able to. The more I want what I want, or the more I think what I think—the less I am able to mention it in any way at all. It was so beautiful in the park the tears came into my eyes, but they stuck in my veil and froze there and nobody knew the difference.

"Beth," Tommy said, "do you like this?"

"Do you like this, Tommy?" I said.

He said he did.

"Let's not be so quiet," I said, because it rather frightens me to be so quiet with Tommy. "Tell me about Governor's Island and what you're doing there now. I shouldn't think you'd want to study and drill trying to get an officer's commission when there isn't going to be any war to be an officer in."

"I'm not so sure of that."

"You've promised you won't go over with the Canadians or the Ambulance."

"Curiously enough, I don't care much about adopting this war from the outside. When I fight I want to fight as an American with Americans. There's time enough. Meanwhile I'd like to be ready when the chance came. If it doesn't come—there's no harm done."

There certainly is no harm done to me if it doesn't come, and it won't—it won't. I'm pretty lucky.

When I got home Lester Price was there and Dolly Grainger. Dolly is a sweet little thing—born the same year that I was but aged about two,—though when it is a question of a boy she grows up rather rapidly in a certain way. What I mean is that she is catty but not developed. Eileen Douglas is my most intimate friend, and she is thoroughly trustworthy and never copies one's hats or ideas without being invited to do so especially. Dolly has her eyes on Lester, whose father owns a locomotive company and has made

millions out of the Allies in addition to the millions he had before. We call Lester the multi-billionaire, which makes him furious, as he is a socialist himself and is going to live in Greenwich Village when he is grown, wind and mother permitting, as Tommy says,—which they won't.

Dolly had to go home early and dress for dinner, but she couldn't get Lester to do more than to let her out of the door. I must say I admired her methods, and if I had been Lester I don't see how I could have resisted them; but he did, and came back and settled down before the fire with me. Father says he can't see how it was that Fate let him have a real fireplace,—that a gas log is just about the degree and kind of a thing that has always been dealt out to him. On the other hand, mother wouldn't have a gas log, and when there is something in this world that she won't touch with a ten-foot pole she never has to, some way. I am like my father in so many ways that I am bound and determined not to be like him in this. Dolly Grainger will never do anything or go through anything that makes her

disagreeably uncomfortable. It is written all over her that she won't. In a different kind of way mother won't either. Father has to, and will. Shall I, I wonder? If there is anything in will power,—No! No! No!

Lester wanted to talk about his ideas of being a socialist and a pacifist. He said he was a militant pacifist and wanted to fight the war idea with his own spirit. He said he was tired of being pampered and having his own town car when the children were starving in the street, and even beautiful and high-spirited girls like me—that's the way he talks—had to plow through the streets on foot.

"The children don't starve in the streets," I said. "Police Commissioner Woods is too much on the job for that; and I'd rather ride in a hansom cab than all the landaulets and cabriolets on earth—that is, when it's pleasant weather."

"Yes," Lester agreed, "but so much of the time it isn't pleasant weather in winter."

"Thank you for your roses," I said. "I like the coffee-colored ones almost as well as those

vivid pink ones." I didn't tell Tommy, but he has sent them twice since my birthday.

"I wanted to send them every day," Lester said, "but I didn't think you would like it."

This was a dilemma, because I would have liked them every day very much indeed.

"You are very kind," I said, "to send them as often as you do. It was lovely in the park tonight."

"It's lovely in the park every night," Lester said, "but I don't care when I'm driving through it alone."

"I wasn't alone," I was going to say, but instead I said, "Don't you?"

"No. Elizabeth, do you—do you like to be alone?"

"I so seldom am," I said, "that it's hard to say."

"Elizabeth, you don't think I'm serious, you don't take me seriously. You don't know how—how serious I am."

I began to feel spooky.

"I take every one seriously," I said.

"You don't like my being a pacifist."

"I don't mind."

"Or a socialist?"

"Every one has got to be true to his own innermost feelings."

"You don't know how glad I am to hear you say that."

"I'm a kind of pacifist myself," I said, "but don't tell anybody. I believe in Preparedness on account of its being so good for one, and fine for politics, but I don't want to go to war."

"Bless you for those words," said Lester, out of some book he had been reading. He reads different kinds of books all the time, and quotes out of them in his ordinary conversation. Aside from that he isn't really silly. He has lovely manners and is very good-looking. Then he went on:

"You don't seem to think I am serious, but I am serious. You don't know just how serious.

"You're always serious, Lester," I said soothingly.

"Serious, I mean, about things I care for. Serious about you."

What could one say?

"I think of you all the time. I can't think of anything else except socialism. I've—I've got it bad."

"Got what bad?" I didn't mean to ask that, but I couldn't sit dumbly listening all the time.

"Love for you," Lester said. "Elizabeth, I want you to be my wife—some time."

"I don't want to," I said.

"Do you mean that?" His voice was full of pain, awfully full. He turned white.

"I don't want to be anybody's wife. You can't get married when you are as young as we are."

"I know you can't. That's why I said some time."

"Well, let's not worry about some time then," I said vigorously.

"Aren't you in love with me? You aren't, are you?"

"No."

"Are you in love with anybody?"

"Lester," I said, "we mustn't catechize each other. There isn't anybody for me to be in love with. All the men I know are buying Christmas presents for other girls, anyway."

"I'm buying them only for you."

"Well, that's something," I said. "Lester, I do value your friendship. Don't you think we could let it go at that? I think when you're grown up you'll feel entirely different, and want to marry lots of different girls that don't resemble me at all."

"No," he said slowly, "there will never be any other girl for me but you. I know that now. Sometimes you know such things when you're young, I guess. You're the one. I may change my mind about my convictions some time, but not about you."

And I believed him. I suppose you do know such things young sometimes,—as young as we are.

"I'm glad I told you," he said.

I am not glad he told me, only in one part

of me. In the other part I am frightened. I keep wondering about it. Will I ever feel that way about any one? Did mother feel that way about father? It hardly seems possible for all her niceness. Does Marcella Harcourt feel that way? If she does how terrible it will be if her sweetheart meets the fate of those other Canadians. How terrible. . . . Poor Lester. . . . Did Tommy feel that way about that twenty-nine-year-old woman?

CHAPTER III

JANUARY

I SIMPLY hate the Germans. They are so mean in everything they do. There ought to be some way of stopping them. Of course I don't believe in traveling on a belligerent vessel when we have already been warned that anybody being submarined on one may precipitate the whole country into war. I have thought that with ordinary precautions being taken no one need fear the tragic worst, except the soldiers that have gone into the trenches more or less deliberately; but these Zeppelin raids, for instance, make the cold shivers run down my spine.

Tommy has a friend who was with the French Ambulance, and worked pretty hard carrying people around on stretchers and burning up old bandages and one thing and another. He has the most picturesque tales of temporary hospitals

being rigged up in old churches on the firing line, and describes it all very well. In one corner there would be the lame, the halt and the blind playing cards under the light of a rough candle; in another a priest giving absolution to one who was dying; and over all the altar-candles' dim gleam, and the grim sound of doctors in consultation mingled with the groans of sick men in the classes between the two I have just described. He says he was never afraid at that time. He was too busy carting around the dead and the wounded; but when he went to England and visited a friend near a munition factory, and there was a Zeppelin raid, why he was simply paralyzed. Imagine showers and showers of steel needles, any one of them capable of penetrating a man and a horse. I don't call that sportsmanlike. Tommy explains that these raids do no real good except to alarm and terrify and damage a few non-combatants. These are the times that make me despise the Germans utterly. The Scourge of Attila—that is what they remind me of.

But the war is soon going to be over, I believe. It looks as if we'd have a happy New Year in every sense of the word. January opened sort of auspiciously anyway. Tommy sent me violets and *orchids*—lots of violets and only two orchids, but think of it—for New Year's, as well as having given me that jade pendant I helped him pick out for my Christmas present. I would have felt delightful if I had picked out something for jealousy's sake, now wouldn't I? The opposite of meanness is certainly the best policy.

I went to four New Year's coming-out parties, and danced myself into a state of delirium and had an elegant time, though they were all rather small and informal. Father says the rich are getting so exorbitantly rich, off of this war, that they consider it poor taste to make any kind of a display of their earnings. I like informal débuts though. You can dance oftener with the best dancers and get away with it. Also the food though not so splurgy in these times is really better, and it is easier to eat more. I hate pâté de fois gras and I love chicken salad. So these privations are simple for me.

On top of all this zippiness and joy in general is President Wilson's stunning message or proclamation through the Senate to the world. He has come out nobly and magnificently for peace. His idea is to mediate with the Allies and arrive at a conclusion that will settle the whole business for every one, without too much anguish in any one quarter. It is certainly a corking idea for peace to come through us. It depresses father in a way, though he admits that he didn't realize that Woodrow Wilson had so much real common sense combined with literary style and eloquence. Anyhow the whole world is sitting up and taking notice, and it all looks pretty good to me. I don't realize that I mind the war at all until there is some prospect of having it stop. Then I know I've been having a kind of unconscious toothache about it. Eileen Douglas' best friend's husband—best English friend's—was killed in action months ago and she—Eileen—has just heard of it. Of course, I never saw this girl, but I've seen her picture. Oh, poor thing!

Tommy still keeps on drilling at Governor's Island, though I don't see why he should. He

took me to have dinner with his mother the other night. Of course, our families have known each other for years, but I've never been there before except with father and mother and other august and elderly people around in bunches. This time it was just me and Tommy. They have a biggish little house on Fifty-seventh Street, but they are not very rich or very poor. They have three maids, and no butler. I always felt that I'd rather have one butler and one maid. A butler is so impressive, when he really looks like one, though so many butlers nowadays wear glasses and look like chauffeurs or carpenters. If I couldn't have a "Mi-lord the carriage waits" kind I wouldn't want any. I wouldn't change anything about the Richardsons' house, though. It isn't so very elegant, but it is so very right. It looks as if it had been lived in and "loved in" for thousands of years. I hate to use the word refined, but it does describe it better than any other, the whole atmosphere and way every room in it looks.

"It is good to see you again, Elizabeth."

Tommy's mother is almost old. She has piles of white satin hair very smoothly arranged, and she wears nothing but gray and lavender.

"I am glad to see you, Mrs. Richardson," I said, "and mother sends her love, and says I am not to ask for more dessert the way I used to when I was young."

"How old are you now, Elizabeth?"

"Eighteen years, two months and four days," Tommy put in unexpectedly. "I forgot her birthday, mother, so now I am keeping track of her age by the day so as to be ready next year."

"He always remembers my birthday for eleven months of the year," his mother said, "and then the one month when it occurs his mind is a blank about it."

We smiled at each other understandingly.

"Oh, I didn't mind," I said.

"You are not going back to school this year, are you?"

"I wanted to go to college," I said, "but father doesn't like the higher education for women, and it seems selfish when you are an only child and

chiefly want to go for the lark, to insist upon taking four years right out of your parents' lives."

"Good girl," Mr. Richardson said in his rumbling kind voice.

"I didn't care about it much," I hastened to add, for fear I had sounded unduly self-sacrificing; "if I had, I suppose I should have talked them over. All my interests are really in New York,—all my friends, too."

We were having a lovely time like that when Tommy's married sister came down. She isn't a woman that I could ever like, I am sorry to say. She is very smart and very correct and she always looks me over as if to say, "Dear me, where did this little thing drift in from?" She dresses as if she were rolled in her clothes before the glaze was put on, and then baked in the kiln until she was just right. I never saw such perfection, and Tommy has not a bit of that manner. He is stunning—nobody could ever look stunninger than Tommy can, but it isn't in any John Drew kind of way; it is a sort of dear shambling way,

more a combination of Douglas Fairbanks and the men you see at the Metropolitan Opera House. —Easy and aristocratic instead of stiff and coldly luxurious.

"How are you, Elizabeth?" she said, giving me an icicle bestrung with minor icicles in the shape of diamonds of all kinds and varieties.

"Very well, Mrs. Godfrey," I said. "And you?"

"Oh, I'm always all right, thank you. Mother, don't you think this room is a bit stuffy?" That's her idea of polite conversation.

"We're going into the dining-room directly," Mrs. Richardson said. "We were only waiting for you, dear."

The dinner was lovely. Everything I liked to eat. So much so that for a while I thought it might have been collusion between Tommy and his mother, who might have planned the menu with special reference to my delights in the eating line, but one look at Mrs. Godfrey's pale cool face rather dispelled that illusion. No meal would have been planned especially for me that

that aristocratic contour was included in. The possibilities were all the other way. However she didn't like it much.

"Everything is smothered in cream sauce and whipped cream," she complained. "I feel as if I were eating yards of tulle, mother."

"The whole effect *is* rather bridal," Tommy said, chuckling.

"Elizabeth likes it, I hope?" from darling Mrs. Richardson.

"I dare say," Mrs. Godfrey replied absently.

A silence, and then enter the war. Everybody might just as well be resigned to the fact that war will be talked at dinner as that c-a-t spells cat, which it does rather painfully on occasions like this I am describing.

"Have you any ambition to go to France and take up any phase of work over there?" Mrs. Richardson asked me. "So many of the young girls are fitting themselves for Red Cross work."

"No, I haven't," I said.

"No ambition to go over and console some

poor fellow who is going to get his marching orders?" Mr. Richardson put in. "I hear that American war brides are more in demand than any other kind—in England especially."

"I'd rather be a peace bride," I said, and then seeing Tommy's eyes upon me I blushed crimson.

"Lots of the younger set are going over this year," said Mrs. Cat Godfrey, "especially the girls who haven't the responsibility of a big social career before them. I think if I were not married and had my choice between oozing out into society as so many of the girls without the proper background are doing this year that I'd go over in a minute."

"Would you?" I said, seeming to be the one spoken to, and having nothing else to say for the time being.

"Society doesn't mean much in our lives, does it, Beth?" Tommy put in attentively.

"It means something in mine," I said, "and if it didn't I wouldn't go to France as a kind of excuse for my not having any background."

Mrs. Godfrey turned and smiled at me polite-

ly. I hadn't meant to answer her so personally, but I couldn't arrange my speech any better in the short time I had to think about it.

Conversation became general for a while, but soon she began to make remarks to Tommy on the pretty little Mrs. Allensby that she had seen him with so much of late. I had never heard him say anything about any Mrs. Allensby. It was then I could have laid down my cards and gone straight out into the dark night, and home. There doesn't seem to be any rest for me in my mind. As soon as I have made it up about one thing that I feel about Tommy, some other thing comes on the docket.

"Who is Mrs. Allensby?" I asked Tommy when I *was* on the way home. We walked by my request, as it is so near and I didn't want him to have to buy me a taxicab unless I was truly sure that he wanted to.

"Who is she? I don't know," Tommy said absently.

"A widow?" I persisted, wanting my darkest suspicions confirmed.

"Sure she's a widow."

"Tommy," I said, "I've got something to tell you. I had an offer of marriage the other day."

"The deuce you did. Are you going to accept it?"

"That depends."

"May I know the lucky man's name?"

"That wouldn't be fair."

"Everybody'll have to know it some time, if you accept him."

"Not for a while."

"No, I suppose not."

"I want your advice."

"What advice to you want me to give?" asked Tommy.

"I want to know whether to accept or not."

I don't know why I put it like that. I had no idea of accepting Lester Price for a husband—I should think not,—but I did want to know whether Tommy would feel it in any way if I intended to do so.

"Do you care about the young man?"

"Why, yes," I said. If I didn't care for

Lester a great deal of course we wouldn't be on those terms of speaking of marrying each other.

"Um—mm," Tommy mused. "Is he rich?" he asked me suddenly.

"Very."

Nothing more was said on the homeward journey, excepting inquiries as to my state of warmth or coldth. I was disappointed because I wanted to discuss the matter enough to get some idea of Tommy's point of view on it.

"Well, anyway," Tommy said, as he let me into my own door, "I'm glad you *called* Sis. She needed it."

"Good night, Tommy," I said.

"Good night, dear," he said.

Father and mother were sitting before the fire when I came in. Mother was knitting on her tenth soldier sweater. Father was saying something about being deeply depressed because there were no bounds or limits to the organized savagery of the Prussians.

"Here's Elizabeth," mother said, breathing

a quite audible sigh of relief at being interrupted. Then as I came in somewhat draggingly and stood before her, "Well?" she asked.

"Well, what, mother?"

"Did you have a pleasant evening?"

"Yes, very pleasant."

"How is Mrs. Richardson?"

"Nicely. She sent her love."

"Was Mrs. Godfrey there?"

I made a face.

"Tommy seemed to me to be looking a little tired when he came for you. The poor boy has to work pretty hard, I am afraid."

"Any harder than any other boy of his age and energy?" father inquired a little caustically.

"He has more responsibilities. His father and mother are more or less dependent on him, I suppose. He starts rather handicapped that way."

"He is glad to do it. I know he is," I said.

"Take a boy like Lester Price," mother went on as if she were talking logically and not dragging in an entirely new subject. "Aside from his

money he is free to carve out his own career, to make anything of life that he chooses. He doesn't have the kind of care that ages a boy prematurely."

"He got aged prematurely all by himself then," I said.

Mother put out her hand to me.

"At eighteen we're all very old in one sense," she said, kissing me. "I want you to be happy, Elizabeth. I don't want you to do anything foolish before you know what you are doing."

After I had put on my blue flowered kimono and braided my hair for bed I went back to the living-room to get a book I had left on the table. Father was still sitting there smoking.

"Come here, Piggie," he said, adjusting his knee for me to sit on.

He has the most beautiful smile, if he is my father.

"Was it a successful evening?" he asked, as I snuggled into his arms.

"Yes, daddy."

"What does your mother mean by all these tender hints and sighs about your doing or not doing something foolish?"

"I don't know, daddy," I said, "but I think she wants me to be engaged to Lester Price."

"Lester Price,—that milky baby? How old is he?"

"Going on nineteen."

"Bless my soul. Does he want you to be engaged to him?"

"Well,—yes," I said.

"Do you want to be?" Father's tones reflected nothing but pure astonishment.

"Well,—no," I said.

"Well, then, for heaven's sake, let's hear no more about it."

"All right," I said.

Father put his arms around me more protectingly.

"You don't like anybody better than your old father yet, do you, Kitten?"

I hugged him very close by way of answer. I don't like to say yes or no to that sort of ques-

tion until I have gone over it carefully in my own mind.

"Father, do you believe in love?" I asked him after we had sat by the fire a while in silence, except that he bumbled a little in his throat the way he does when he is comfortable.

"Love?" he said.

"I know a girl," I said,—I didn't want to say it was Lester so I changed it to a girl—"who says that no matter how young you are when you've found the *one,* you can tell it, and that you'll never like any one in the same way again, no matter what happens. Do you believe that?"

"I don't know that I do."

"Then you don't believe in love?"

"I don't know that I don't."

"Whither thou goest I will go, and thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God,—that kind of love. This girl she—she felt that way, I think."

"I don't know," father said.

"What do you believe in then?" I asked practically.

"Integrity—integrity," father burst out. "Individual integrity,—national integrity. Keeping faith with yourself, with your people, with your world." You tap father anywhere and you get a perfect fluid stream of this kind of sentiment.

"Do you think that women as a general thing, father," I said, "have a whole lot of integrity?"

"I don't know," he said again.

"How could I, for instance, show that I had it?"

"By claiming your own, by acknowledging your own, by fighting and if necessary by giving your life for that in which your honor is involved. The principle is the same whether you are a man or a woman."

"You're thinking about the Germans again, father," I said.

"Well, maybe I am."

"What makes you?"

"I suppose the real secret truth is that I want to get over on the other side and fight 'em. I can't because it wouldn't be fair to you and your mother, and maybe they wouldn't take me any-

way, but that's where my spirit is, daughter, fighting in France."

"It isn't our war, father," I said.

"It's more our war than you know, Baby. Do you realize that you can't take a map of the United States and pick out any city—little or big—that hasn't sent its man or its numbers of men to help destroy the enemies of France?"

"No, I didn't realize," I said reflectively. "I suppose that's why you get so hot under the collar about this whole war business. I didn't know that a man of forty would feel that it was his place to go."

"Good God, child!" It was a simple exclamation but it told me a great deal. "I have a rendezvous with death," he said, quoting solemnly from the poems of Alan Seeger, "and I'd like to keep it if I could; that is, I'd like to destroy a few Germans in the attempt. I run across so much German propaganda in my business, and so much tolerance and shillyshallying with it for expediency's sake that my endurance is almost at an end.—Oh, well, I mustn't wear out my only

child with my maunderings. I ought to send you to bed."

I put my head back on his shoulder.

"Daddy," I said, "in this deep crisis, do you wish I was a boy?"

"I wish I had a boy."

"A boy to go?"

"Yes."

"A boy like Tommy?"

"Yes, like Tommy,—like Tommy if he had gone over with the Canadians."

"He's going to wait," I said, "and go when we get into the war." I said when—not *if*, and a dreadful feeling smote me. My heart seemed to leap up and turn over, really physically to do that, and a wave—a white wave of faintness bore down on me for an instant, but it was only an instant.

A fat log in the fireplace burst open, revealing millions of tiny sparks that showered upon the hearth. I cuddled all the way down in father's arms, feeling as sleepy all of a sudden as a moment before I had been wakeful and apprehensive.

"I'm very comfy," I said, "and I think you're sweet, father."

After which I added drowsily a few minutes later:

"Lester is a pacifist."

"I'm going to speak to your mother about *that,*" father said determinedly.

CHAPTER IV

FEBRUARY

I THINK Greenwich Village is the most interesting place. I have been hearing vague rumors about it for some time, but having been the merest child until a few brief months ago it was not considered the kind of thing I ought to take up or investigate.

Lester Price got up a party to go down there the other night and it was the greatest lark I ever had. Eileen Douglas' brother's wife chaperoned us; otherwise there was her husband, Eileen, Dolly Grainger and Peter Ives, and another boy—a friend of Lester's that I had never met before, red-headed and pussy-footed—and my humble self. Mother let me go after mature deliberation, but we didn't ask father. It was the wisest way to handle it, both mother and I agreed. Dolly simply didn't ask at home. She couldn't

have gone if she had, so she truthfully stated that she was going to a party given by Lester and chaperoned by Billy Douglas. Billy is as full of the deuce as she can stick, and only sixteen months and three days older than Eileen, but having the dignified handle of Mrs. tacked on to her, she is very useful to give countenance to any questionable proceedings on the part of our great and glorious bunch.

Greenwich Village is the name given to Washington Square and another square called Sheridan Square and several alleys called MacDougal Alley and Washington Mews and things like that. It is the home of poets, artists, painters, interior decorators, actors, anarchists, pacifists and all that sort of people. It is so fascinating you just simply gasp when you get down there and feel yourself completely associated with it. The women all wear smocks and bob their hair—even women grandmother's and grandfather's ages—and the men wear long wavy locks and look like Greeks or Hungarians, or the poet Shelley.

I never had so many thrills in one evening in all my life. In the first place Washington Square is very beautiful at night. There was a glister of snow and frost over everything and that big arch stood out gently, gleamingly, and made me think of an altar, though it isn't shaped in the least bit like one. Eileen says that the whole picture is more like Paris than anything, though the Arc de Triomphe—which is their Washington Arch—is a long way off from their Washington Square—the Latin Quarter. Eileen is a tall slender girl with a face like a flower—a bluebell I should say—and it is wonderful to think of the experiences she has had in her brief span of years, traveling around the world, and encountering all there is to encounter in so doing. Billy hasn't encountered so much, but she has done a lot more. Even before she was married she had.

Lester was very solemn about his party. He whispered to me that he could not tell me what it meant to him to have me accompany him to the place where so many of his other ideals were

enshrined. When we approached Sheridan Square—the whole eight of us piled into the Rolls-Royce borrowed from his father for the occasion—his own car seats a meager five and a half—his emotion scarcely knew any bounds. I could sympathize with him for I understand that he has many supreme convictions on the subject of the equality and brotherhood of mankind. Also, I knew that he was feeling rather low in his mind about the turn affairs at Washington have taken, and my behavior to him, and was cheered up by making arrangements to entertain us.

Eileen is going to take up nursing, one of those short and easy courses at the Red Cross, and actually go abroad in the early fall to care for the French wounded and dead, and our own if we have any by that time, and Lester naturally resents that, being so against giving encouragement to the war lords. I hate to have him and Eileen estranged because they grew up together and were always such chums. Eileen knows how to handle him too; but since we've severed diplo-

matic relations with Germany, there is a coldness between them.

We went to a largish and very much white painted inn, set cater-cornered in this fascinating, cute and ducky kind of square. It is all full of signs and placards strung outside of houses and buildings and announcing dances to be held, and places where you can get tea and other things of equal alluringness. It's a little like Coney Island in a kind of way, but it's all real. The people live the way they live, and eat and dance and have studio parties *all the time*. They don't change their costumes and go away after the performance is over,—they *are* the performance. I think it's the most romantic thing to know about.

Inside the inn I was rather disappointed. It is bare and you eat off of the literal board of the table, just a kind of kitchen table, and of course no one sweeps up the crumbs;—but the people we saw! Words are entirely inadequate to describe them. There were even more interesting people down-stairs in the café part of the place, but Lester simply didn't dare to take us there. Robert

Douglas was hard enough to manage as it was, but fortunately Billy can twist him round her little finger, sulky though he may be while the twining is going on.

There was a girl of about my age with great burning eyes, and bobbed hair, and a shaggy man with her, who smoked cigarettes end on every minute of the time, and between mouthfuls of the potted pigeon she was eating. Lester said she had been married to an anarchist and was now divorcing him because she didn't believe in marriage. She was wearing a straw-colored smock and a great velvet hat that swept out over her fine features and made her look very handsome. To my surprise she had an elegant natural muskrat fur coat in quite good condition.

She was talking about Universal Service with the zest and gusto of one who was having an altercation with a cook. She actually used an oath—I don't mean just damn—in discussing President Wilson's attitude toward the War College Bill. Lester whispered to me that the man she is engaged to now, but not going to marry

because she doesn't believe in marriage—not the man who was with her but another man still—is very high up in the American Union Against Militarism and has got himself into considerable trouble in one way and another.

It seems strange how people's opinions vary. Mother is joining that crowd of women that go around in automobiles to campaign for the passage of that bill. She won't go out of the city of course, and she won't do any of the talking from the front seats, but she'll lend her support to the movement, and incidentally have some excitement and fresh air. I consider that one very pleasant way to spend the end of February. I guess I don't know what I think about anything. It makes my blood run cold when anybody hints of the actual possibility of our being precipitated into war, but when father comes home and tells about Senator La Follette introducing motions to prevent American ships being armed, that makes me furious. I think he is an old goat to interfere with preparedness when everybody knows by this time that it's the only self-respecting attitude we

can take as things are now, since Bernstorff got his walking papers. As for filibustering, it just makes me sick to think of all the graft and downright selfish motives that are behind it. A senator gets up in Congress and talks the loudest kind of foolish nonsense so there won't be any time left for anything else. If that were ever done in school life I know just what would happen to those choice spirits that originated the idea! And now at a national crisis!

All these people down in Washington Square are perfectly violent about Peace,—not peace without victory especially—but some sort of socialist kind of peace. I don't know what their idea is. Rob Douglas says they are erotic and neurasthenic and don't know what they want. I don't agree with him. That girl I was watching might want a great many things at the same time, but she'd know what they all were. I'd like to see her take the part of Joan of Arc. I don't know why I would, but I would. She could do it like a streak.

Dolly made up to Lester, but he was adamant.

He ordered beautiful things to eat, guinea hen and romaine with Russian dressing and prune soufflé—all soufflé and very little prune, the way I like it. I wish mother would go down to Greenwich Village to get her next cook. They always have the best of cooking, Lester says, no matter what kind of a joint you get into.

The evening was marred once by Billy's having to cry and threaten to go home if Bob wasn't more thawed out in the midst of the party. I hate scenes, even if they are only Billy managing to get her own way. I don't see how people can quarrel and call each other names in cold blood and then go right on being the same again till the next time. I'd rather be like Mrs. Godfrey, than which there is no more to be said, I hope.

Also, a young socialist friend of Lester's came over to our table and spoke to us. He shouldn't have done so, Lester said, but he actually didn't know any better. He wore a bright rose-colored tie and dancing pumps, and he is a psycho-analyst by profession. That means he tells anybody by just a few minutes' conversation what dreams

and nervous disease they have, or are heir to. I liked him and so did Eileen, but Dolly treated him like the dirt under her feet. To do him justice I will say that he treated her that way, too.

I said, "I don't suppose you think it is quite a consistent attitude to disparage the Germans." I didn't want him to think we were rude in discussing the war, as we had sort of drifted into doing so from the many conversations we had overheard.

"Why shouldn't you disparage the Germans?" he asked quizzically. "Isn't this technically a free country? Aren't we technically a free people and a free race?"

"And it is a war of democracy," I added.

"I believe in every one doing what he chooses," he said, "being what he chooses to be, thinking what he chooses to think, saying what he chooses to say."

"Wouldn't that make it rather awkward?" I hazarded.

"Why *not* make it awkward?" he said.

"Well, of course,"—I began.

"Why try to make anything—any way?" he said. "Freedom doesn't mean that, does it? Freedom means discarding—refusing the state of consciousness that makes you think of things as being awkward or not awkward, good or not good. The thing that is a good thing for you to say is the thing uppermost—the thing intrinsically pure because it emanates from your untrammeled feeling."

"Well," I said, "I hope—"

But Bob Douglas told me to come over and sit beside Billy because there were some things Billy had to talk over with me, so I had to excuse myself from this peculiar discussion. I should have liked to go on with it.

I wanted to go to the Pirates' Cave and the Green Tree Gift Shop, but Lester said they were both closed at that time of night, and anyway we had to be home by nine-thirty. Mother said she could hold down the lid that long, and no longer. So reluctantly we put on our wraps and

started homeward. My education was certainly advanced a great deal by the sights and adventures of that evening.

How little can we tell what Fate holds in store for us, though. I went home expecting to find father waiting for me, semi-placated by mother, and to give a very expurgated account of the evening to them, and then go to bed and cry for half an hour over the way I had juggled with the real truth as represented to my father; but what should happen but for me to find that both my doting parents had suddenly been called out to my Aunt Ida's, and I left alone with my thoughts.

I wasn't alone very long, however. Precisely ten minutes after I had entered the house Tommy called up in the most towering rage I have ever known him or any man to be in. I had purposely put him as far out of my mind as was possible for the entire evening, as I knew if I ever stopped to think how he would feel about it, that my guilt would push all my pleasurable sensations out of the reckoning.

The first thing he said was that he thought my

mother must be crazy. I said she wasn't of course, and that I thought it was all right for me to go on a party that was chaperoned. He had just heard about the expedition through some indiscreet leak somewhere, probably traceable to Dolly as usual, and he was simply boiling, foaming, frothing. At first I protested gently, but that not being any use, and feeling so much like crying anyway, I hung up the receiver.

And so now it has been days and days—five days, seventeen hours and fourteen minutes to be exact, since Tommy and I have had any conversation with each other. I can hardly bear it. Of course he has been here, but I was out,—and one day he telephoned but I would not go and speak to him on account of not knowing what in the world to say to him. He probably never will forgive me for going down into that horrid village with one who is well known to be a pacifist.

I don't blame him, of course. He has a great many things on his mind besides me, and me he rather expects to behave comfortably and not to do crazy things and deceive either one of my

parents. There has been an argument going on between us ever since February third. He thinks we are as good as at war now, and I am perfectly sure that we are not and needn't be. That old submarine blockade isn't anything so very startling. It's just about what you expect of that barbarous nation, Germany. It's only the way they've behaved all the time, and now we are behaving threateningly to them. Armed neutrality with the emphasis on the armed is the best way to handle such people. I don't think Ambassador Gerard was very safe over there, anyhow. I know a girl who was a relative of his by marriage, and she says her whole family is perfectly relieved to think he will soon set foot on American terra firma.

Father is going on in the usual fatherish way, but I don't have any arguments with him because it takes you and another person to have an argument, and I won't argue with anybody but Tommy. I couldn't, because it uses me up too much. Father says we may be going to get into this war at this eleventh hour to save our faces,

and what remaining scrap of decency our shifty course has left us—that's father! He thinks—dear darling—that the Allies are beaten without us, and if we don't help with men and foodstuffs the Huns will conquer the world. I came home last night and found him with his face buried in his hands because he was in such a state of mind about it all. He cares about politics and patriotism as if they were me and mother personified. It seems strange that anybody can feel about those things as if they were personal troubles, like death and reverses and quarreling with those you love, and also that any father of mine can want to shed blood between us and Germany,—that is, to go to war and bring down suffering and famine on us here.

It is, after all, a selfish idea of anybody to want to go and fight. I can't help thinking that it is first and foremost selfish. If you loved anybody really and truly you would care more about them than war. You wouldn't want to go to the front and leave them. I can understand that father perhaps would. He has had me and mother

a great many years anyway, and he has a romantic temperament. Besides life is an awful grind for him. So I don't blame him so much,—that is if there is a war,—though I don't for a moment admit that there is going to be,—I can see that father would get a whole lot out of it if he could at least skin over to the other side and look around a little. But what I can't see is how if anybody younger—as young as twenty-seven or eight—cared for any one over here in any real way they could possibly be looking *forward* to the moment when war would be declared and they could engage in it.

"Where is your sporting instinct, child?" Tommy asked me one day in the midst of our going over things together for the thousandth time more or less. "We've agreed so amicably about everything in the world up to now. You seemed so interested in all I've been doing and planning, and now you suddenly decide to can the war stuff. Now that we stand some chance of getting into the Big Game you lose your interest."

"I am crazy about Plattsburg," I said, "but I don't believe in war as much as you do."

"I wonder why not?"

"I wonder?" I said.

"Doesn't Lester believe in war?"

"No, he doesn't."

"Oh, ho! Well, I suppose that's what I get for trying to rob the cradle. Lester doesn't believe in war, and so forsooth—"

"It isn't that," I said. "I don't think that people who are fond of the people they might have to leave behind ought to be in such a furious hurry to declare war."

"Oh, woman," Tommy said, "I give you up!"

And now ever since then I haven't seen him. I've only had that one horrid telephone message, and I don't know what I should say to him if I did see him. After any one has raged and stormed at you, it's hard to know what to say. I would rather die than have any one I care for get angry with me, anyway. I suppose most people would.

CHAPTER V

MARCH

THE Ides of March are here.—Julius Cæsar. I never knew such a queer lonelyish time of year in all my life. I can only figure out in part what's the matter, but even if we are going to get right into the war I don't see any reason for all New York to get its tail between its legs and palpitate. It isn't that anybody seems afraid. Father thinks we're a nation of cowards, but I don't. A dog is frightened when a cloud of it doesn't know what seems to hang over it and keeps on failing to burst, but if it hasn't been overbred or anything it goes right at its enemy as soon as it sees it and shakes the daylight out of it. So with us, yet this weird invisible thing that overshadows us is so weird and so invisible that you wouldn't think rich and poor alike would be cringing under it, but they are.

You can't go anywhere in any comfort with belongings to hold, because the moment you are seated in a public place the orchestra plays *The Star Spangled Banner* and just as soon as you have recovered from that,—*The Marseillaise.* I don't carry a muff any more no matter how cold my hands get, because I simply can't manage it with all this rising going on. You're lucky if you don't get *Columbia, Gem of the Ocean* sandwiched in between the others. I don't mind it at the movies so much—I like to go to the movies now all the military stuff is released and you can really see our boys drilling—but in a restaurant when you are perishing of hunger and the waiter after interminable delays has just served the soup, why, then one or two verses of orchestral enthusiasm comes harder. Every time they play the national anthem I choke right up, and that's so mortifying. I'm getting to be a regular baby. I am not a crying girl at all, but let somebody start something patriotic and I'm off. Even the tramping of soldiers' feet when I run into a little company of them going into the armory, and

the tears come. It isn't so much personal sentiment either as a feeling there is in the air.

Certainly I know very little about France compared to the people who have gone over there and lived in her—or should I say on her?—for any length of time, but just that one name—France—somehow makes you feel a whole rush of surging emotions that you didn't know you had before. I don't know what it is. Tommy and Eileen Douglas have described to me the way Southern France looks,—brilliant clay color and brilliant green, and all overrunning with flowers and beautiful shrubs,—and also Paris which I always imagine to be like a kind of glorified Chicago, only cream-colored and graceful in all its outlines, and not trashy in any way,—but it isn't any of their descriptions that count, or even pictures of little ruined villages in the sun with gallant French officers presiding over them,—it's something way above all that. It isn't what you see in a photograph of a friend that brings an emotion of love into your heart, it's the *friend* him or herself that you are reminded of. I am

reminded of something about France that I don't even know. That may sound silly, but it's true nevertheless.

"A Man from This House Is Fighting in France,"—they threw a picture of a house—I don't know where the house was but it was very foreign-looking—on the screen yesterday at the Rialto, and I nearly died. "A Man from This House Is Fighting in France;" and it was just a little stone house with the table set for supper and a young girl in the window listlessly looking out.

If we do get into it and there is a conscription bill passed a month or so afterward, why, then I suppose those that are within the draft age can get exempted if they have dependents. Tommy has his father and mother and I strongly suspect some fraction of Mrs. Godfrey on his hands; anyhow he has to stake her to a generous share of what he provides at his parents' table. I believe in the last analysis Tommy would think a long time before he was tempted to go and leave his mother and father to shift for themselves. It is

all right to talk these things over in theory, but when it comes to the actual working out of them there are lots of things to be put before duty to one's country.

Tommy is away now on business, but I had a nice talk with him on the telephone before he went and things rather smoothed themselves out between us. After all, he knows that I know and I know that he knows that nothing can disturb our real faith in each other, or real enjoyment in each other's companionship and way of having fun over trifles. We are more congenial than many people who are exactly the same age. I was glad to have this little telephone talk with him though. I miss him during all this National Upset. I should like to know how he feels about it, though I trust that in spite of his natural sadness about being unable to enlist at once, he will look at the whole proposition in the way I have indicated.

My two cousins, George and Roland, are just spoiling for war, and I think perhaps it will be a good place for them. Roland's mustache would

certainly be very becoming to a uniform. I suspect him of wishing to get quite spoony with me, but I pretend that my mind is on other and loftier matters. He is deliberating whether to enlist or not without waiting for the final ultimatum. He keeps asking me how much or little I'd care, and I keep evading the question, though he is very handsome certainly and a great relief from Lester, whom everybody is picking on indiscriminatingly just at present. Lester's convictions are very dear to him, but they *are* trying, especially to me who feel in honor bound to defend him at times.

I saw Marcella Harcourt to-day. Her friend is reported as among the missing, and yet she could smile. Perhaps she hasn't got so much in her as I thought she had, or it may just possibly be that he wasn't a sweetheart after all. He may have been just a suitor like Lester.

She talked about a great many things very feverishly, among other things about the cutting down of Epping and Windsor Forest by the Canadians who went to England for the purpose. It was certainly quite noble of England to give up her

famous woodland; even I have heard of Windsor Forest, and have always thought it must be a very epic-looking place; and now it is to be sacrificed to make trenches of. The Englishmen are not natural woodcutters and the Canadians are. Marcella is awfully well posted on everything her compatriots do. Canadian women have done a terrific amount of war work. American women don't coordinate so well. I think they could if they just buckled down to it, but buckling down is hard work. Father says we only strike an average that way by some women killing themselves at it, and some doing nothing.

Personally I think my mother does pretty well. She has a natural tendency to take the easy side, but when she is put to it she does everything required of her without a murmur, and she keeps steadily at it. She balked at standing at the door of a restaurant on a stormy night with a small dipper in which she was supposed to gather coin for the French Relief, but she did work night and day to help equip a unit that was getting ready last week. She spent almost all of

one night without sleep down at Red Cross headquarters. Of course, that doesn't sound much, but she's awfully dependent on her sleep.

I'm not doing anything much but knitting and the same old ticket selling and hopping around for different relief societies that somebody has got me into. Dolly Grainger says her mother does so much of all this business that she thinks it lets her out, but I tell her nothing lets her out personally. We certainly can't lie back on what any one else is doing at this crisis. We've got to act for ourselves.

I can't help being glad that the war is so far away, though. I hate the sight of blood. There can't be anything much grimmer over there than the constant crying of extras that we get. It is the dolefullest sound, and you hear it any time, especially in the middle of the night, just a monotonous mournful kind of chant that you can't catch any of the words of. It rises suddenly out of the darkness, and you don't know what calamity it heralds. U-boats sinking, or munition plants blown up, or Americans killed

on the high seas, or anything. It reminds me of the way my nurse used to frighten me in my childhood by telling me that it was goblins coming to see if my arms and legs were under the covers.

I wonder if the Germans could get over here and blow us up? Only the lower part of New York City would be in actual danger from bombardment from the harbor; but I hope they won't. A lot of estimable people live down as far as Fourteenth Street, and I should hate to go through the experience of a tragedy of that magnitude even if I remained personally unmangled.

Tommy came home yesterday. He looked tired when I first saw him, but after dinner—he came late in the afternoon and mother asked him to stay—he looked more like himself and cheered up a good deal. I was thankful father wasn't at home. I just didn't want to hear any more. Verge-of-the-War stuff, and those two exemplify the whole situation whenever they get a few minutes together and are able to discuss matters.

After dinner mother went off to a suffrage meeting and left us to chaperon each other.

"Well, how shall I begin to tell what happened?"

We talked while Bessie was clearing the table in the dining-room just beyond; I don't know what about. Mostly about the Germans in the neighborhood and whether one should or should not trade with them. I don't believe one should except in special instances of Germans one knows and likes. I wouldn't go into a German restaurant for anything—the food would choke me, and I won't play a bit of German music, neither do I think they should give German opera at the Metropolitan—but I do think our grocer is blameless, and also that comfortable good-looking laundress we employ that does up my tucked waists as if they were her own daughter's.

"In other words you have a Prussian prejudice that works theoretically but not actually."

"Well,—yes," I said.

"Feminine," Tommy said.

"You aren't very complimentary," I said. When a man begins to call you feminine he always means something patronizing.

We went and stood at the window and looked down at the park all atwinkle with little lights and frosted with snow. Tommy reached over to the switch and put the electricity out so that we could see the effect better. There was my best loved part of New York lying safe and unharmed before me, *breathing* down there in the night like a human being, and Tommy was beside me. A hand organ came along below our windows and began to play that obsolete tune—*Tipperary*.

"Beth," Tommy said, "you're crying."

"I am not," I said, "specially."

"Tell me what made you."

"I don't know, so I can't."

"It's time you and I had a show-down," Tommy said firmly. "I can't make you out, so I don't know where we're at. I propose to discover."

We faced each other there in the window en-

closure. I can look almost levelly into his eyes, so I did.

"Go on, Tommy," I said.

"Well, then, are you going to marry Lester Price?"

"No."

"Why did you tell me you were then?"

"I didn't. I asked your advice about it. If I had been going to, I wouldn't have wanted your advice."

"Oh ho!" he said thoughtfully. Then he added abruptly, "What's the matter with you about the war?"

"I'm sick of it," I said.

"There's going to be a war," he said, "and I'm going to get in it. If *you're* sick of it—"

"What's that got to do with me?" I said.

"Well, if you don't know—I don't."

Once more we turned our attention to the park. I could not help shivering. It does look so peaceful down there, just as if there couldn't ever be anything happen to it, or anybody within

its reach. Tommy put his arm across my shoulder.

"Beth," he whispered slowly and somewhat sadly, "you're beautiful."

"You're great, Tommy," I said. "There's nobody like you."

He took me by the shoulders and turned me toward him till he could see my expression.

"I don't know," he said, looking into my face, "I don't *know.*"

I closed my eyes.

"Yes, you do know," I said with the greatest difficulty, "you do know, and I know."

"What do you mean?" he cried hoarsely, "what do you mean?"

I looked at him steadily.

"You know what I mean," I repeated, "you're mine, Tommy, and I am yours." It was like a dream. We say what we do in dreams, for no reason except that we are dreaming.

"My God," Tommy said, "that's it."

"What did you think was it?" I said—afterward.

"I thought I loved you, and I'd have to marry you if I could, no matter what you were really like inside."

"I always knew what you were like inside," I said.

"Now, you are somebody quite different," Tommy said, laughing quietly.

"Yes, I am," I said.

"You're so beautiful."

"Tommy," I said, nearly twisting a button from its moorings, "I'm not really, you know." But I adore to have him think that I am, of course. I'm always going to dress very neatly now, and in things that he likes.

"When we are married," he said a good deal later, "do you think I shall ever penetrate to the truly innermost you? Will the day come when you will really talk to me and tell me what's in the secret places?"

"It won't need to come, but if you want it to—it will," I said.

"Do you love me, Beth?"

I do. I love him better than any woman that

I know of has ever loved any man before. That may not be true, though I think it is. How do I know how any woman may have felt before? There is nothing that any one can tell you or that you can read in books that expresses a feeling of that kind in the least. There is nothing that tells you anything that you find out in one minute of experience.

Tommy and I love each other. Now let the world go on fighting or stop fighting. Nothing that is very terrible or very wrong can happen to us now. There will be a way smoothed out for every one, I am convinced. When there is love there must be peace and rest. All those women with their hearts full of love for their soldier sweethearts will stop the war by their power of loving, or the war will be stopped for them. Tommy says I am wise, and surely this is real wisdom.

Nothing matters now, though. Love is here for Tommy and me.

Now let him go to war—if he wants to; but

he won't want to. We couldn't be separated. We simply couldn't be!

If Marcella Harcourt loves that man, he isn't dead. I must tell her that to-morrow, poor thing. I wonder why she ever let him go.

CHAPTER VI

APRIL

I DECIDED that I wouldn't just simply sit around and wait for war to be declared. Once when I had been exposed to the measles, and the little girl I took them of was supposed to be dying, which didn't add much to the general anticipatory feelings I had, I sat down and waited for my time to come. That it didn't arrive has nothing to do with the devastating misery I endured. "It takes one voyage to learn," as my grandfather says, and I have always flattered myself that it didn't ever take me more than one. I remembered this measles event which only happened a year and a half ago—but that's a long time in my life—and decided that I wouldn't repeat the incident. So I ignored the war. As far as I was concerned there wasn't going to be any war, I argued, so why worry. And I didn't.

But I must admit that a great many things conspired to try to break into my peace of mind. The day the president called the Special Session of Congress, Fräulein Walerstein came in from Long Island ostensibly to buy some hair tonic and Liederkranz cheese, but in reality to pour her troubles into mother's already overburdened breast. She was dreadfully frightened for fear she might be interned or have her trunks gone through or something. She said here she was in an alien country living peaceably in the suburbs with an American sister-in-law, and doing nobody any more harm than to give German and music lessons by the hour, and here was her beloved Fatherland involved in this unreasonable imbroglio with her adopted country which was behaving in a manner too despicable for her to bear, and what was she to do and how to hold it in her heart?

I was glad to hear mother tell her, though a trifle more elegantly than I am at present indicating, that if she wanted to perch under our roof-tree when her emotions got too much for

her she'd have to cut out the derogatory stuff. Mother told her flatly that she couldn't get away with this adjective-adjective America business, and reminded her of Germany's duplicity in the matter of Mexico. Whereupon Fräulein wept and said that such things had to be done; and German employees in whatever station had to do what God and the Kaiser pointed out to them as their duty, and besides that it was a very expedient idea and might have worked. Mother frothed gently at the mouth and said that she guessed they had better leave the Kaiser's God out of it, as he was not a very popular character in the States just at present; which Fräulein did not like very much, but had to swallow. I love to see mother rampant, because she so rarely gets excited over anything.

Then followed a rather fishy tale about a rich family where Fräulein gives lessons. It seems that she was alone in the library and went to look at a book in the bookcase, and as she did so some kind of a paper dropped out of it which she was naturally examining when the master of

the house, whom she thought to be in town at his business, but who was actually at home, sick in a dressing-gown and slippers, caught her at it and gave her the merry dickens for it. Mother soothed her and assured her that she was unduly nervous and excitable and must have exaggerated the incident. It didn't occur to me that she was exaggerating. I thought she was doing the exact opposite, and concealing the real point of the matter, whatever it was. The interview terminated by her begging mother not to go into the subways or the Hudson tunnels—why, goodness only knows—and by her assuring me that I was very undeveloped for my age compared with the rosy German mädchens. Fräulein has one of those natures whose parting word is always an unflattering one. I hope she chokes on her next meal of weiner schnitzel and noodles.

This was the second of the month. On the evening of the fifth father telephoned home from the club that he didn't expect to be home for dinner and that it was only a matter of a few hours before we would be actually in a state of war.

My first thought was the unworthy regret that Tommy shouldn't have been the first to break the momentous news to me, but he wasn't even in New York to do so, as he had been again called away on a business trip, and it had been a week since I had seen him. In fact, I had seen him only once since—that night. There were ways in which I was glad I hadn't. It is hard in broad daylight to look at people and talk commonplaces with them when you have promised them that you would marry them the night before. I found that out when he came to say *au revoir* before leaving town. I was very cold, and shivery, and could hardly look him in the face; but being Tommy he didn't mind, and kissed my hands only, and held them against his nice fuzzy overcoat. No other person would ever have known that I was all right when I was like that. Tommy!

I was going to my dancing class that night and I was all dressed in my pink and baby blue dancing frock with the big butterfly bow of tulle at its back. It was an informal subscription

class, and this was the last of the dancing. Mother wanted me to go because it had taken quite an effort on her part to get me into the thing and I wanted to please her. My being engaged to Tommy was a kind of blow to her, of course, because I am the only daughter she has, and therefore her only hope of having a millionaire son-in-law is now blasted. She really does like Lester just as much as she does Tommy. In fact, there are some ways in which I imagine they are more congenial. Lester is always asking her advice about matters of behavior and so on, and Tommy only jollies her along and saves all his serious conversation for dad.

I thought just for a moment that I couldn't go to the dance, but Dolly Grainger was coming for me in her car and I had given my word so it seemed to me no more than right that I should. It isn't ever square to break an engagement that you can keep. I could keep this. So I did.

It was the strangest party. The girls were divided into two classes, those who didn't wish anybody to know they were afraid, and those who

didn't care who knew they were. All the girls that didn't have brothers or sweethearts to worry about, were planning to go somewhere away from the coast for their summer holiday, to save themselves from invasion and bombardments. All the boys were more or less pleased. When I say all, I omit Lester who was pale as a ghost, and Peter Ives whose chief object in life is to get his neckties and stockings to harmonize without actually matching each other too vulgarly. He owes something to the war anyway; he can wear a wrist watch now because the soldiers in the trenches do. If they'd only use violet toilet water, maybe he'd be willing to go over and help them out. This idea is not original with me. It is with Eileen Douglas.

"What do you think about the war?" I said to one boy that I was fox-trotting with. Of course you really don't see much of the girls at a dance.

"I think it's a pretty good idea," he said.

"But think of the misery it will precipitate us into."

"Why not?" he asked.

"Wouldn't it be better to stay neutral and be able to give food and all kinds of supplies to those in need?"

"Not on your tintype. You don't really think so either, do you?"

"No," I said, greatly to my own surprise, "I don't."

We put in a few tango steps in silence.

"Will you go?" I asked.

"Did you think I wouldn't?" he retorted.

"You wouldn't go if you were—engaged, would you?"

"All the more."

"Why?"

"Any girl I'd get engaged to would want me to go."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure I'm sure."

"I don't understand how a man can feel that way," I said.

"You wouldn't want a man to feel any other way?"

I evaded that issue, which was not one I cared to elaborate on, of course.

When I got home I found mother and father sitting up and staring at each other in a ghoulish way. They looked so terribly depressing that I hailed them with a semblance of merriment at least.

"Well," I said, "the world hasn't come to an end yet."

Then Tommy stepped out from the window embrasure and my heart stood still. He held out his arms, and I went straight into them as a matter of course, and to my surprise and chagrin began to weep there.

"Oh! my little girl," Tommy said. "Oh! my darling."

"Poor baby," father said.

"Tommy, how could you?" mother moaned. "Why couldn't you have waited? She is so young."

"I promise you, I swear to you," Tommy said over my head, "that I won't sacrifice her."

"How can you not?" mother moaned again.

"I won't go," Tommy said, "unless I have to."

"You'd never have to," mother said; "there'll be plenty of ways out. You ought to let the men who are free of responsibility go in your place."

"I will," said Tommy.

I flung my arms around him of my own accord for the first time. "No, you won't," I said.

Tommy held me off and looked at me.

"Beth," he said sternly, "what do you mean?"

"What do you think I mean?"

"Do you mean you want me to go, Beth?"

"I mean you've got to go, Tommy," I said.

Father said, "Oh! my God!" but Tommy just held me still and looked at me—and looked at me. Then slowly his eyes filled with tears.

"It's all right, dear," I whispered to him, "we love each other, and we must do right. Our country needs us."

"You don't want him to go—to enlist at once?" mother broke in horrified.

"He won't have to go right away," I reassured her. Of course, I had found out all about these prospects weeks before. "He hasn't even a com-

mission yet. He'll have to go back to Plattsburg for a while, and trust to luck to get over as soon as possible."

Father came and stood with his arm over Tommy's shoulder.

"I'm a proud man, Tommy," he said, looking down at me tenderly.

"So am I,—father," Tommy replied, smiling at him.

"I had no idea you would take it like that, Beth," he said to me when we were alone.

"I hadn't either, Tommy," I said, "but there is one condition attached to it," I added slowly, "that I didn't like to mention before mother and father."

"And that is?"

"That you will marry me before you go."

"I can't do that."

"You can't *not* do it."

"I wouldn't do such a thing."

"Tommy," I said, "don't you know that I'm your wife anyway?"

"Yes," he said. "I know that—now."

"Can you stop me marrying you then by law, if I want to?"

"No," he said after a pause, "I can't, I suppose."

"Don't you want to marry me?" I said. "Please, please, please tell me so."

And so he said that he did, and comforted me.

It seems very strange that before I saw Tommy I didn't understand how I felt or what I wanted to do, and that after I saw him I knew perfectly, so that I could make it clear to every one. I was selfish in my love at first, but I am not that way any more. Whether Tommy is with me or not doesn't matter so much,—what matters is that we belong to each other; and I know that God will take care of him for me wherever he is. We mustn't try to do our bit,—that isn't enough. We must do our all. It would be a good deal easier not to believe this, but it wouldn't be right. That's how I really feel, only I had to be in Tommy's arms again before I knew it.

Well, I think it's a good thing to be married when you are young because your husband can educate you then. I have made some mistakes that I should have been perfectly mortified to make with anybody but Tommy. I also have done some humiliating things that I was sorry Tommy had to realize. For instance, I was offended, on account of my bringing up, I suppose, when Tommy stuck his face in my door a few days after we were married, with shaving lather on it. Instead of laughing he wiped off the soap and came in and sat on the edge of the bed and argued with me. He said that he was just the same as my father now, only a little more so, and that conventions between us had therefore changed, but that I had only to tell him when the least little bit of a thing disturbed me, and we would get it fixed up.

"I don't mean to be silly, Tommy," I said, "but I don't know anything at all about being married."

"We'll just have to work it out together," he said.

We were in a hotel overlooking the park—only for a week—but neither Tommy nor I ever admitted that the week wasn't a lifetime or that it was coming to an end. Most of the time I didn't believe that it was. I felt that I was going with Tommy everywhere for the rest of his life the way his right arm was.

We were married on France Day, which Governor Whitman appointed to celebrate our friendship with France on the anniversary of the day Lafayette sailed to fight by the side of Washington. Just think! I went down to Union Square and put a flower from my bouquet at the foot of the statue there. Tommy said he would take me to the Café Lafayette for my wedding breakfast if I wanted to go, but I told him that I was too grown up now to want to do such a far-fetched thing.

We were married in St. Bartholomew's with nobody but ourselves and families and the organist. It was one of the very first war weddings, but we didn't advertise it as such. It wasn't very much like anything I had ever imagined. I

really didn't notice what the church looked like, nor which of our combined relations appeared, and which didn't. I wore a white broadcloth suit and seal furs and a turban of seal with some violets on it, and my bouquet was violets and orchids and lavender sweet peas. I don't know why, but I didn't want any brighter colors. All during the ceremony I was having a little private ceremony of my own. "I am being married to Tommy," I said over and over and over again thousands of times. When I said, "I do," it came out loud and ringing. When Tommy said, "I do," the tears brimmed over my eyes and ran down on my flowers.

Afterward we went to Sherry's. I made the mortifying mistake of drinking my own health when "The Bride" was proposed, and Mrs. Godfrey looked very superior. Still she was nice to me, all things considered, and Mrs. Richardson was darling.

"Forgive me for marrying Tommy," I whispered to her. "I'm only doing it because I can't

help it." I felt very apologetic to the Richardsons on account of the circumstances.

"I wouldn't have forgiven you if you hadn't," she whispered back.

Lester came to see me with the others after we went back to the house. I had no idea that he would when I invited him, but of course I couldn't leave him out very well, and I wanted just a few of my best friends in. He looked so pale that I excused myself and took him off into my den a minute.

"Elizabeth, would you like to have me enlist?" he said.

I thought.

"No, not for me," I said.

"It's all I can do for you now."

"You can't do it for me," I said, "until you do it for yourself."

"I'm afraid I never shall then," he said, with a wan smile. "Elizabeth, do you love Tom Richardson?"

"Why would I have married him," I said, "unless I did?"

"Oh! I don't know. You're so interested in the war, and everything. I never saw much in him."

"Well, he's my husband now, Lester," I said, smiling. I wanted to put him at his ease because he was so very much broken up. I had an inspiration. "Listen, Lester," I said, "would you like to kiss me?"

He faltered.

"It's your last chance," I reminded him.

"Would *he* mind?" he said, palpitating.

I shook my head.

When it came to the point he couldn't do it he was so upset, and I put my arms around him and kissed him on his cheek and his forehead, and petted him until he felt better.

"I shall never forget this, Elizabeth," he said.

"I'm glad you won't, Lester."

"It gives me an entirely new glimpse of your character," he groaned.

"It does me, too," I acknowledged.

And then I went back to my Tommy.

CHAPTER VII

MAY

IN a way it is humiliating to say that you could only afford one week of honeymoon, but Tommy and I made up our minds that we ought not to stay at our luxurious quarters until he went to Plattsburg on the fifteenth of May, especially since he has to be running in and out of town settling up his business in different ways. So I went to the Richardsons' to stay until he left. They were planning to give up their lovely house and go to live with Mrs. Godfrey in her apartment.

"It's too bad," I said to Father Richardson, "when you're so comfortable here. I wish you could stay."

I think he felt the meaning behind my words, for I thought that perhaps I had done wrong to throw my influence toward Tommy's going to war instead of against it for their sakes.

"There is only one way in which I could be made uncomfortable now, daughter," he said, "and that is by having a son who failed in his duty at this crisis."

"I feel that way, too," I said. "I shouldn't like to have a son or a husband that didn't want to enlist."

"We come from a fighting line," he said proudly; "some time I should like to go over with you some of the family records and personal papers of certain of Tommy's illustrious relatives."

"I should be proud to," I said.

"Tommy's wife ought to be familiar with the part his forebears have taken in the making of American history."

"What's all this talk of wives?" Mother Richardson asked playfully, coming into the library where we were sitting, with her hands full of soldier's pajama cloth. "All I see here is a little girl with her hair down her back, curled up like a kitten."

I laughed because I was wearing one of my

blue pinafore dresses that cross and tie behind, and my hair in two pigtails the way Tommy likes it best. I wore it up all the first week I was married, of course, but he begged me to take it down again for informal occasions. So I did.

"I can look twenty-five," I said, "and whenever I go up to visit Tommy at Plattsburg I am going to."

"So that every one will say, 'What a charming but mature woman Captain Richardson's bride is.' "

"By the time he gets to be a captain I won't be a bride," I cried. "I'll be an old married woman."

"When do you expect that will be?"

Mrs. Richardson was teasing me, but I like to be teased in that lovely way of hers.

"In three months," I argued. "Wait and see what a transformation can take place in me in three months."

Mrs. Richardson both smiled and sighed.

"I don't want any kind of transformation to take place in you," she said.

I don't think her daughter would altogether subscribe to that sentiment. She'd prefer to have me look like Theda Bara as a member of the Russian nobility, with a stare that wouldn't come off. It's no use pretending that she didn't want Tommy to marry a luscious society dame. She did.

The Richardson family don't talk any more about the war than we did at home—they couldn't—but they seem somehow more intimate with it. Of course, Mr. Richardson knows Wilson and all that, but that isn't what I mean. He gets personally excited because Balfour broke the precedent of a century and a half by addressing the House,—Balfour being a British representative, and the president going and sitting in the gallery in order to let him. He was so thrilled at having a marshal of France in New York he could hardly eat his lunch: and still he didn't read any of the speeches the commissions made. He said he was sure they said all the suitable and proper things. I could just see father devouring them bit by bit and making texts for his discourses out of them, and yet I knew he wouldn't

go so far out of his way to look at either Joffre or Balfour or Viviani.

I, of course, would and did. I not only stood on Fifth Avenue for hours waiting for the procession that was leading Joffre to the home of Henry Frick,—I hope he liked the nice strip of green turf on Mr. Frick's front lawn—but I went with Eileen Douglas up to Columbia as an alleged student to see him receive his honorary degree there. Joffre was a darling, he looked like somebody's fierce old grandfather. Tommy went to the lawyers' dinner to Viviani, but of course he was too busy to trapes around with me any. It was only two days before he went to Plattsburg.

It was a funny thing that in one part of me I didn't so much mind having Tommy go. I don't know how to explain it. Of course, the other part of me was almost dying of it. I think I had had so much pure happiness in two weeks of having Tommy all to myself that I was almost stupefied with it—anesthetized, I mean. I had rested in Tommy's arms, until I felt that being

there actually wasn't the point. The point was that they were my arms, and I belonged there. It was like coming into the ownership of a perfectly good house. You'd have it just the same if you weren't in it every minute. In fact, you couldn't expect to be. So, I got a lot of undue credit for my bravery in *letting* Tommy go; and afterward when the real ache for him set in nobody knew it.—Tommy!

I went home on the eighteenth and it was a peculiar home-going. Mother was at the Red Cross doing more emergency work for them, and father and I and the Conscription Bill sat down to dinner together. Father was father, and cook was cook, and Bessie—our half a servant who comes in only afternoons—was Bessie: but *I* was changed. I was Mrs. Richardson, the well known, in family circles, war bride, and I couldn't get over it. Father and I were very merry, however, and I tried to talk to him about the way I thought Tommy would have talked, until Bessie brought in the dessert which was prune whip—Tommy's favorite dessert and mine

too,—and the strain was too much for me. So I fled.

What do I care about the British gains south-east of Loos? Or the Hindenburg line? This war is getting to be like a stupid game that nobody beats, and the Germans go on killing everybody in sight and those that are hidden in trenches too. I am not going to read any more war books. They make my head ache. Thirteen days of Tommy's three months are gone already. I'm going to see him next month if everybody thinks it's best. One unexpected thing about my marriage is that it rather curtails my freedom. I was getting to have a very good time being grown up. I put all my theories into practise and was very firm with father and mother. I even went to matinées alone. One must see war plays—even if it is rather criminal to spend money on one's own pleasures at this time of strife, and I did other things of equal harmlessness that every one concerned was too busy to notice; but now since I wear a wedding ring I'm a more general object of attention and therefore advice, and

therefore actual admonitions not to do things. I know it's foolish to write to newspapers and magazines about personal problems but I've been thinking seriously of doing so, guardedly and under a *nom de plume* of course, just to inquire at what age it isn't perfectly barbarous for a wife to stop minding her mother and father.

General conditions haven't changed so terribly. We're still pretty much alive and kicking in this country. It's still their war over across the ocean, and we hope and pray over here that we shan't have any nearer glimpse of its privations. Food has practically hit the sky, though, and over on the East Side there have been riots and things all the spring about onions and potatoes. Also they mobbed City Hall one day, but like that character of Shakespeare's we so often hear of, I forget which one, I think the poor things rather "protest too much." Father says they're incited by the I. W. W.'s and the labor leaders and others of Lester's friends. Anyway, I went out to see their parade and it consisted of numbers of enormously fat or fattish women in good clean

clothes with shining rosy faces marching and carrying banners saying, "Our Children Are Starving," and in a van behind them a lot of robust children enjoying the scenery. I suppose the really starving ones weren't able or presentable enough to parade.

It's perfectly awful to say but I don't care so much who starves if it isn't Americans that I know and like or the French that I know I would like. All these Hungarians and Jews are much less near to me than the poor Belgians, for instance. A very funny thing happened to me when I was watching that parade, though, and I don't see how it could have been an emotional effect since I didn't feel any emotion, but I keeled over in a one second faint—a thing I have never done before in all my life. I didn't tell anybody because I was so ashamed of it,—but is Tommy getting an unhealthy wife? He wouldn't like that, I know. Also, I am not so altogether pleased with food as I was. That, I think, is just natural pining. If you wake up in the morning and cry for your husband every day between the hours

of six and seven thirty, why it would seem logical that you wouldn't feel the same appetite for breakfast. I still opine that I'm not a crying girl, and I wouldn't have Tommy know for anything that I ever shed a tear on his behalf. "Whither thou goest I will go;" I can't go to Plattsburg with him, but his people are my people—I should say they were—and his God is my God even though I've had to adopt the Lord God of Battles, to whom I was so much averse a little while ago.

Well, I am getting a very unworthy prayer in my heart. Tommy would think it was unworthy, but is it so much so, I wonder? I'm praying that this God I've adopted will stop the war, now that I've let Tommy enroll in it. America has done her part. She has subscribed herself to it. She'll send her men across the water if necessary, but maybe it won't be necessary. That's my hope.

Before you are married you don't know how much you need a husband. Afterward some of the things you thought at that time become null

and void. Not having had your husband with you every minute you then gaily speed him on his figurative way after the ceremony; but married people ought not to be torn apart from each other—war or no war. It isn't right.

George has joined the Navy. I just simply don't see how he could wear that sailor suit and childish hat. He looks about as distinguished and refined as our milk man, but he's as proud as a peacock in it. He wants to marry somebody, but I told him not to.

"Why shouldn't I get married?" he said. "You did," which of course is a logical argument.

"I don't think you'd better, George," I said, "especially since you haven't anybody in particular in mind."

"I could pick one out," he said.

"Don't marry for the sake of getting married," I said.

"Why?"

"George," I said earnestly, "there are lots of good reasons."

But he simply could not see that I was right.

He rather wanted me to sound out Dolly Grainger for him, but Dolly gets into my family only over my dead body: besides she's out for higher game than a sailor suit and baggy trousers wrapped round the inconsiderable figure of my cousin George. Roland might suit her better, as he has quite a lot of money of his own, but I'm not on very good terms with him, as he has never spoken a word to me since my marriage and wouldn't come to the wedding. He sent me a beautiful rug, though. Persian, with a rose-color background and a blue border. It looks worth about a million dollars. I want a home with Tommy to put it in.

"You must remember, dear," Tommy writes, "that this is literally a school for officers, up here,"—in that little peak on the map way up on the top of New York State,—"every hour and minute of the day is spent in learning to do something that is to be done by the men under our charge, a little later. I've been through the ropes before so it comes very easy to me. I think I've got the trick, some way. A lot of things come perfectly natural to me that give some of the

other fellows a heluva (s'cuse me, dear) lot of trouble. I think General Richardson handed me down something that I never knew I had before. It can't be any muddier in France than it is here. I came in from a ten-mile hike an hour or so ago the muddiest man that the American skies ever looked down upon. I had my picture taken to show you. You will see that it looks more like a gingerbread man than it does your Tommy."

The rest was all about other and more personal things. Romeo and Juliet didn't have very much on us in some ways—to put it slangily. Tommy has made me a map of Plattsburg and his quarters, so I can follow him around with the point of a pencil when I am going over his letters.

I'm trying to harden my mind, but it won't stay hard for long at a time. I simply can't bear rifle practise any more. To shoot at a clay pigeon upsets my nerves. Maybe I wouldn't be so timid about a Boche, I don't know.

Marcella Harcourt came to see me to-day all dressed in black.

"Your brother?" I said.

"No," she said. "My friend."

"Are you *sure?*"

"Yes, my brother wrote me. He—knew."

Then the pitiful tears began to stream down her face.

"Marcella," I said, "why didn't you do what I did—marry him?"

"He never asked me," she said. "I don't think he cared as I did,—and now I shall never know."

"Don't say that," I said mechanically.

"It's true," she said.

But while I was comforting her a terrible thing was taking place in my own mind. I had decided that if Marcella loved that man he couldn't be dead, for I knew from my own experience that two people who loved each other could not lose each other in that dreadful way—so soon. I knew it. When Marcella told me that her friend was really dead it was a shock to me but when she confessed that it hadn't been a *mutual* love I felt *relieved* in that part of me devoted to me

and Tommy exclusively. I don't claim that this was a worthy or holy way to feel, but it was what I felt.

Nobody could be sorrier or perhaps as sorry for Marcella as I was, however, though I was a little glad when she got all through her crying and went home. That kind of grief keeps on and on indefinitely you know, and I was expecting other and less melancholy guests to arrive at any moment. They were Lester and Peter Ives, Billy and Eileen Douglas and Dolly Grainger. I didn't get up any party, but they all telephoned at different times and asked to come. I thought it would rather bring back my girlhood days if I allowed them to appear in a bunch. So I did.

Eileen and Billy appeared first.

Billy kissed me gaily.

"Welcome to the order," she said, pointing to my wedding ring. "You'll have a lot better time being married than you ever had single. You mark my words."

"I expect to," I said.

"You can't be quite so useful to me," Eileen

sighed. "I did think it would be such larks if we could have gone across together later."

"That wouldn't have come off anyway," I reassured her. "My parents consider me too young to go to France."

"Though old enough to be married," Billy laughed. "They say the nurses are having the time of their young lives. They smoke all the soldiers' cigarettes and send back home for more, which they also smoke. I'd give my eyes to go with Eileen."

"Oh! I wouldn't be allowed to go if you were going," Eileen said cheerfully. "I'm going over there to work seriously."

"Well, at least pick up all the scandal you can to bring home to me," Billy implored.

On this chatter the boys came in,—the same old boys. Lester had just the same things to say combined with some minute information he had picked up about the way New York was policed, which we all know anyway. He insisted on reiterating what steps would be taken at once if New York were attacked, how signals were

arranged from one police station to another and where the emergency camps were to be located and all that dope.

"Tell us that there is a net in New York harbor to catch submarines, Lester, and that all one night last spring the port of New York was closed while they were mending it," Billy said satirically, which of course hurt Lester's feelings, whereupon Peter Ives jumped into the breach. Peter may be lightweight and all that, but his mother certainly brought him up to do and say the polite and correct things in an emergency.

Dolly Grainger arrived with my cousin George. I was quite amused at George's enterprise, though a little angry at Dolly for taking the trouble to string him. George is a good boy, but he is not affectionate and he hasn't any real sense of humor, two things which I consider to be essential to a successful existence either on one's own part or the part of others with whom one is associated. Dolly is frankly pleased with my marriage for the simple reason that it gives

her one more of her own set for chaperon. She always has so much mischief up her sleeve that she needs a *collusive* chaperon stationed at about every block. I have yet to tell her that Tommy has forbidden my being a chaperon to any of the crowd. Bessie brought in the tea, and the conversation continued in the same old familiar way that I have heard ever since we grew old enough to run around together. I portioned out lemon and sugar and passed cocoanut kisses the same way I have always done when they dropped in,—but there was something different about the whole proceedings. Something had happened to me, and I felt it more and more as the eating and drinking progressed. I felt it even more than I did the first evening when father and I had dinner alone together. The whole bunch seemed to grow dim and fade before my very eyes, and nothing to remain but a bright unwinking fire in the fireplace, and me alone in my blue and white ruffled dress that Tommy likes so much.

It was somewhat electrifying to have Mrs.

Godfrey announced in the midst of this scene of gay and intimate persiflage. She came in, dressed in golden brown broadcloth and seal, and looking as if she had just stepped out of a packing case instead of a wind-blown avenue. She was, however, very pleasant to all of the crowd. Even if she does say the most inane and pointed things to people when she first sees them she certainly knows how to do so. She is a picture to look at. To that I will agree anytime.

"Tommy seems to be having a good time, doesn't he?" she inquired in a sprightly way of me.

"He's working pretty hard," I said.

"Yes, of course. Mrs. Allensby was at Plattsburg over the week-end, you know."

"Yes?" I said.

"She said she had the pleasure of taking Tommy and her brother out in her motor Sunday afternoon."

"Yes," I said, "wasn't it kind of her?"

Tommy had written me that he was motoring

Sunday afternoon but he certainly hadn't mentioned doing so with Mrs. Allensby and her brother.

I stood up to bid one after another good-by, and they had the usual hard time breaking away, parting from each other and remembering to run back and say little silly things to me. Mrs. Godfrey went last. I was awfully tired of standing by that time. I don't know why. I just was.

"When are you going up?" was my sister-in-law's parting shot. "Mrs. Allensby goes up every week. You must meet her sometime."

And after she was safely out of the door I crumpled up on the floor and fainted away, and all that I said for some time after that, according to mother, was:

"I want my husband, I want my husband, I want my husband."

CHAPTER VIII

JUNE

TOMMY has married a very ignorant wife, which is a pity because he himself is so cultured in some ways. Of course I speak French and German and had a lot of fun doing chemistry in school but none of my other education, though flung at me hard enough at the time, seemed to stick. I've always thought it didn't matter so much what you could do with your mind if you could do about everything with your body. I thought tennis and swimming and riding like a streak were about all there was to it, but now that I am getting to be a trifle puny and having aches and pains that I never knew anything about before except by hearsay I am worried about my poor old mind. I am not Tommy's intellectual equal. There's no use talking. I'm not. Also, I know very little that's useful. When I tried to

write out my military census I was abashed at what I couldn't do for my country.

Then I don't know what I think, and that alarms me. I am getting worried for fear Tommy married me because he thought I knew what my attitude was in a great many matters that I don't feel stable about at all. He sets such a great store by my sporting instinct—and after all, what and where is it?

Do I want to let him go on being at Plattsburg and having Mrs. Allensby up there every week-end? Answer: I do not.

Am I crazy for him to get his commission and go over and join Pershing at the first possible minute? Answer: *I am not. I am not.*

Do I follow the campaigns on the different fronts with a map and a pencil with enthusiasm and intensity? Answer: No.

Do I know anything about this much discussed situation in the Balkans that I could reel off at short notice? Could I even define a Balkan without referring to the book? Answer: Well, no—Well, no.

Do I know anything about the Russian Revolution to speak of—or care? Only that they revoluted and then fought about it and that Kerensky is pronounced with the accent about equally distributed between the first and second syllables. Tommy won't have to go to Russia not by the wildest stretch of the imagination—so *no* to the caring end of it.

What good am I, therefore to a man like Thomas Richardson, Junior? Answer: Not very much at the most ambiguous estimate.

The only way I can keep his love is to pretend to him that I am worthier than I am, I suppose,—and healthier. When I get up to Plattsburg and actually see him it may be very hard to keep up the bluff, but I am going to try to. And in the meanwhile I am entering into all the serious discussions I can get into with my father in order to train my mind and exercise it more adequately.

"Father," I said the other day, "what do you really think about this being a war of the capitalists? Do you or don't you think that England

got into it because of her greedy desire to gobble up a few indemnities?"

"Don't be silly, dear," father said somewhat unflatteringly. "All that patter comes from the pacifists and the propagandists. This is the struggle of right against might, and don't you forget it, Piggie, no matter what arguments your rejected suitors may set forth."

"I won't," I said meekly; "besides I never talk war with Lester any more. But, father," I continued, resolved on prolonging the conversation by some pretext or other for the sake of my mental poise and development, "don't you think this will be the last war of the world? Don't you think that what we are fighting now is a gigantic struggle for everlasting peace? What with all our fearsome engines of destruction don't you feel that this is the last great combat of the ages?"

"No, I don't," father said shortly, "nor I trust do you, in spite of your fluffing. Stop and think a minute. In the last three thousand years there has been a bare five hundred free of war.

Are you and I so arrogant that we can assume that anything that happens in the span of our meager little lives can change the majestic habit of evolutionary progress?"

"Well,—no," I said, "I don't suppose so. You think then, dad, that we can get just so far and no farther. That civilization climbs up to its apex and then retreats again like the noble king of France?"

"Something like that," father smiled; "is that a very discouraging thought to you?"

"Well,—no," I said, "not so very. If one great clean-up could cure the world of everything that was the matter with it I suppose there wouldn't be much sense in propagating the species. There wouldn't be any real work for the species to do when they got propagated."

"Exactly." Father began to take an interest in me at this. "Life is a struggle for *life*. Remove the struggle and you have a static—a non-existent world."

"I know it," I said, "but what use is it, then, father? What do we do it for, in your opinion—

why all this getting up our muscle and then the end?"

"Our spiritual muscle?"

"Well,— yes."

"There is usually something to use our muscle on in this world when we come into full use of our functions. Why wouldn't that argument hold good with things that are not temporal?"

"Well, it ought to," I said, thinking. "I think it does, father. Most everything we want is—somewhere? We want Heaven and a life beyond; why isn't that somewhere too?"

"I trust it is," father said; then looking at me keenly he added, "I've noticed one thing, daughter; since this war began, my personal faith in things seems to be augmented rather than lessened. I am not a religious man in any sense of the word, but I am more nearly a religious man than I have been since I reached my maturity. How do you account for that?"

"I don't account for it," I said, "but I know what you mean. I say my prayers every night, now. For a long time I didn't!"

"I said mine the other night," he said a trifle sheepishly. Then he changed the subject. I am somewhat superstitious about speaking of the life beyond. I used to think that it usually meant that some one was going to die, but I guess the great war has brought all those deeper subjects to be more a matter of general conversation than formerly. Besides people are dying all the time, whether they are people you know or not. Every morning paper contains the account of somebody's relative passing along if it's only massed in under a huge head-line that says "German Troops in the Messines Forced to Abandon Positions." Somebody's brother or lover or other loved one paid the toll.

Plattsburg! I am not one of those who has seen my own country first, or even last or all the time. I've been to Palm Beach and to Chicago and to our cottage at the seashore, and most of my other traveling has been commuting. I've never seen any mountains but the Berkshire hills, before these Adirondacks—these boiling, steaming,

wrapped around in blue mist and gray vapor, mountains, all intimately named and conversed about as if they were friends. They are not friends of mine yet. Under their distant shadow my husband lives in barracks and dresses in khaki and spends all his waking hours in a martial routine. I arrived on a Saturday morning accompanied by Mrs. Richardson and did I see my Tommy's face waiting at the station to greet me? Well, I didn't expect to. I knew all about the rules and regulations up there of course, but that didn't make them a whit easier to abide by.

"When is a husband not a husband?"

"When he's in military training." I repeat this silly and meaningless conundrum over and over to myself as if it had some real significance. After that I hum the melancholy chorus, "For the duration of the war. For the duration of the war." I did not tell my father why I had begun to say my prayers again, and I shall not tell Tommy even that I am saying them.

It was a wonderful reunion that night. I did not go to camp, but I went in next day which

was Sunday, and the day after that was the day that I went home again, leaving these mountains and the Wetherill house which is the nondescript hotel that I stayed at, until the next tantalizing and hungry visit can be brought about.

"Tommy," I said, "I have brought you a dozen jars of marmalade that I made all myself, and two pounds of fudge." That was my greeting.

My husband took my hands and saw that I was trying not to shrink from him, but doing so nevertheless.

"Mother," he said to Mrs. Richardson, who stood looking at me wonderingly, "get out of here, will you?—And forgive me?" Then he went down on his knees and grasped me in his strong arms. "What is it, Beth?" he said.

I laughed foolishly, and then I cried without any other reason. "I don't want there to be any war," I complained, "and I want you to come home to me if you love me,—and want to—I can't help saying these things now this minute,—but if you will hold me in your arms without

letting me go for a little while I guess I can stop them."

Then seeing how worried about me this giving way made him, why, of course I did stop them at once. I have a perfectly awful time getting into Tommy's arms, but once I am in them the universe straightens itself out again.

"You are not well, Beth?" Tommy cried in the swift spasm of anguish I had caused him, but I was soon able to demonstrate how well I was. Any one would be well looking into Tommy's eyes and seeing what I saw there.

"I have a husband," I said diplomatically and jokingly, "who is in the service, and even if I didn't want to keep myself in condition for myself I would, of course, do so in order to be an example to him,"—which seemed to be a signal for me to be deprived of breath once more. Tommy certainly has a great deal of strength in his arms.

"Well, don't take this chap Hoover too literally, dear. Keep yourself nourished up to the blooming point no matter what happens."

"To the Allies?" I suggested mischievously.

"To the angels," he said recklessly, "so long as you are as you should be."

"The war couldn't stop, could it, Tommy?" I said.

"No, dear, not without disaster to the whole civilized world."

"Well, my point is that if you feel that way about the angels—"

"There isn't any personal happiness possible to any of us now, until this business is settled," Tommy said gravely. "It's a cruel way to feel, dear, but it's the only way."

"I know it," I said.

The point is now, do I know it? Father and Tommy—they feel it in their souls. It comes with their breath, they draw it in and out of the atmosphere as they breathe. It comes first. Does it come first with me? Could I measure it by my love for Tommy and say, "Save the world and let the love go?" Could any woman? Marcella Harcourt does now—now that there is no other way left for her to feel. Perhaps you could

assent to a sacrifice after it was made for you. I don't know, but it seems preposterous to me that anybody could feel that way either before or after a thing like what has happened to her. I don't see why she cares what happens to the Allies now.

I do not want to have a shadow between me and Tommy, that is, only the necessary shadow of my educational limitations. Even that doesn't loom very big when we are in the same room in town together. He knows that I know things, and I know that he knows things that make us each other's, and there are practical ways that I can teach him; like sewing on buttons and polishing up gilt and nickel with the least trouble. He cleans his rifle for instance the way I do, having changed over from his way, which I think is a great compliment to pay to any woman. That is, he uses squares of canton flannel instead of any old thing as he used to. Also, I could teach him to cook if I only had a little opportunity to do so.

But alas, I can not quite make up my mind to let the war come first, and until I do there will al-

ways be this thing in the world that Tommy and I do not feel the same about. He can put the war before me if he wants to. Everything he does and thinks is right. So I don't mind. I only wish my own nobility didn't go into the small measure that it does. Well, I bought a Liberty Bond with my trousseau money, anyway. A pink and blue crêpe de chine kimono, especially if you have singled it out in a shop months before, is at least a concrete thing to contribute to a world at war.

A funny thing happened about Mrs. Allensby when I was at Plattsburg. It was on Sunday when, according to Mrs. Godfrey, Tommy usually went automobiling with her, and according to Tommy he just took a little run around in somebody's car and got his mind off his work for a while. I was waiting for him to come and get me to take me to camp when Mrs. Richardson returned from a little walk about the town and said that she had just met a friend we both know—a Mrs. Pendleton—and she had said that she had just seen Tommy in Mrs. Allensby's car going south. Mrs. Richardson said that, of

course, she must have been mistaken as Tommy would spend every available minute either with us or getting to us.

Well, I waited an hour and a half of those precious hours that were all I had to be with my husband, and still he did not come. Mrs. Richardson fidgeted, or as nearly did as she could possibly accomplish in her calmness; but she knitted, too.

I kept my eyes open and on her as much of the time as I had to for courtesy's sake, but the rest of the time I kept them shut, while I was pretending to look out of the window or wandering around the room with my back to everything in it. In that period I measured up Tommy's and my love for each other, and I did not find it wanting. The silly suffering about having him by the side of that Allensby woman at a time when I most wanted him by the side of me, I bore as well as I could, which wasn't very well, as the sound of her name has always made me feel somewhat like fainting away since the first time I heard it, and since fainting is a new ac-

complishment of mine lately, why the combination nearly bowled me over shamelessly. Mrs. Richardson came over to me once during my battle with myself and tried to put her arms around me. I tried to let her, but she was fortunately diverted by the knock of an attendant at the door.

When Tommy did come in, he was boiling with rage. He said he couldn't explain, but Teddy Godfrey had got him into something that took a heluva lot of time and he could not get to us before. Would we forgive him? I could readily, and did.

It afterward turned out that Teddy Godfrey was *marrying* the Allensby woman that very day and enlisted Tommy's services. Tommy didn't even approve of the marriage because Mrs. Allensby was divorced and older than Teddy, but not so much older that Tommy could protest against it, on account of Teddy's being of age and perfectly responsible. They didn't want the thing to leak out because of the notoriety, and Tommy couldn't do less than help them out because of the family connection and all that. As I look

back it seems to me a very fortunate thing that I didn't get offended about this before I knew the facts. Certainly they looked very circumstantial to an outsider, but to me they only caused suffering—not distrust or doubt of any kind. A woman that loves her husband can not afford to harbor such things in her heart.

Just the same I am rather glad that Mrs. A. put one over on Mrs. G. My dear sister-in-law was certainly perfectly willing for me to believe the worst of one who is now in the same relation to herself that she is to me. Ah, ha!

CHAPTER IX

JULY

NEW YORK is like a tired lily in an ash-heap, said ash-heap being directly in line with the sun's hottest and most devastating rays, which sounds much more unflattering to my small home town than I mean it to be. I said a tired lily, which after all is not a soiled or faded one, and a lily is always a pleasant object, as is also New York itself to my way of thinking. But it is gritty, and hot. The most earnest admirers of it could not deny those salient facts, or make them any more or less salient.

Always before at this time I have been to the dear delightful seashore—I am slightly sarcastic here, but only slightly as I love swimming almost more than any other thing I do—which seems to have a new swarm of mosquitoes brought in on the crest of every wave thus early in the sea-

son. Then there is the Tinny Ford—not a joke,—the Tinnys are the family that have it to rent—and for a dollar a day and found, I can have the most gorgeous runs out on the rutty country roads, with kind bewhiskered farmers, owners of good stout ropes and excellent teams for towing purposes scattered along at convenient intervals. But Tommy never having been there with me of course I resisted going this season. We can't afford it, anyway. Running two places is too expensive, or even shutting up this apartment and letting father go to his club, and paying the cottage rent besides. The high cost of living is a sober reality now. You can't buy much for your money nowadays, and if it's wheat in any form it's wicked to try to buy it. It's anti-war to have bundles sent home from the stores, but that's all right because I can carry home everything I can afford to buy now very nicely. My husband gives me money, of course, and so does my father who argues that it is the sole contribution he can make to the cause Tommy is serving, to help him support his wife, but most of my

money goes to help in some way or other, if it's only to buy yarn to knit more sweaters. A woman is considered a piker nowadays unless she knits every minute, through bathing and breakfast and so on until she hits the bed and drags the drapery of her couch about her and lies down to pleasant dreams. (Bryant. Note; Literary education looking up.)

Whether or not it is good for me to be in New York I don't know. That is another story and one that is writing itself a long way back in my mind, though nobody knows it, however.

I was feeling so seedy that I finally went to see my good old Doctor Fitch. I didn't tell mother or father that I intended to do so because I meant simply to appear with a tonic, and be patted on the back for my grown-up habitude of getting myself attended to. I didn't tell them afterward from natural and obvious reasons.

Well, Doctor Fitch listened to my tale of woe, about the fainting fits and everything. Then he took me off into his inner sanctum and examined and inquired and examined some more. His

attendant is a good-looking young woman in regular Spotless Town regalia. I shall never forget her big blue eyes and the little red mole on her cheek to my dying day, because she was the first person I saw after I went out of that inside office. The doctor had told me in so many words what was the matter with me.

"I thought that you had to be at least—over twenty," was the first rather ridiculous thing I blurted out. I *had* always thought so.

"No, it isn't a matter of being legally of age," he responded, with his kind blue eyes smiling at me.

Then we paused.

"You knew that these things sometimes came about?" he hazarded.

"Well, yes," I said.

"You go home and talk to your mother. I'll write out a few simple instructions and she'll give you the rest."

"Doctor," I said earnestly, "do you think it would be a perfectly awful thing to do if I didn't talk to anybody at all about it, only you?"

"Why, no, if you talk to me often enough. Little girls usually like to go and talk to their mothers at a time like this."

"You can't call me a little girl any more," I said. "I am not a little girl any more."

"No," he said gently. Tears came in both of our eyes as we looked at each other. I never felt so intimate with any one whom I knew so slightly before. "Better tell your mother," he repeated.

I shook my head, and he came and put his arms around me where I stood. "I'll tell my husband,—sometime," I whispered to him.

When I went home I heard the phonograph in the apartment below us grinding out the now taboo tune, *I Did Not Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier.*

"Well!" I said.

My cousin George came and told me that he thought my cousin Roland—now in his conventional suit of khaki of course—was going to marry Dolly Grainger, out of spite. I then saw why

she had been trailing around with George so much,—to get at Roland through him, which is the very best way it can be done.

"Spite?" I said.

"Sure, on account of his being so sore about your marrying Richardson."

"The idea!" I said.

"The idea!" he said, mimicking my tones. "You t'run down the family fortune and the Price rocks—all at one swoop. You might 'a' considered me a little more while you were about it. It'd be some consolation to keep what money we've got in the family, anyhow."

"Now, who's sore?" I retorted. It was really rather rough on George to be used as a go-between that way.

"I am," he replied succinctly.

I sent for Roland the next day, and to my surprise he came right away.

"Roland," I said, looking into his keen blue eyes and noting the clean look of his skin as it was drawn closely about his temples, "you must not marry a woman you don't love."

"I can't marry the one I do—did love," he retorted meaningly.

"Then don't marry at all," I said.

"And why?"

"It's a sin," I said.

"Why is it a sin?"

"It just is—that's all. You have to love the one you marry."

"I can't—that's all, and I want to get married."

"I thought you had more character than George," I said; "*he* wants to get married."

"Family traits cropping out. Well, I'm going over there and leaving no one at home—barring mother—who cares a tinker's, and I don't expect to come back."

"Don't expect to come back?" I said.

"I don't think a feller ought to expect to come back—if he's really getting in, do you? Oh! this is a fight to the finish."

His words struck terror to my soul, but I soon thought better of them. Tommy has never said anything remotely approaching this sentiment.

"Don't marry Dolly Grainger," I repeated.

"Tell me a good reason why?"

I could not betray my sex altogether at a moment like this, so I only said:

"You mustn't. You must trust the one you marry, permanently."

"What if I say I shall?"

"Then I shall say you shan't."

"Who appointed you to be my keeper?"

"I appoint myself."

"You might have been my keeper, once."

"You shan't marry Dolly Grainger."

"Count o' your making a point of it?" he sneered punningly.

"Roland," I said, "I know something that you don't know. You can't rig up a marriage the way you rig up a—a—well, anything at all, and step right into it. It's—it's too sacred. Besides you might be founding a race."

"Beth!" he said.

Well, you can't choose just exactly the people you'd have to know different things. Roland and Doctor Fitch—people I hardly ever see or

think of. Roland is really an awfully sensitive fellow. He hung around for the rest of the afternoon and though he cut up a good deal, he didn't get hectoring or boisterous once. He promised me he wouldn't think of marrying Dolly, and that he'd try to get back from the trenches intact, and when he went away he patted me on the back and called me "old scout" just the way he always used to. I guess it was worth paying the price for. But it was a price all the same.

When I got up to Plattsburg for the second time there it was just the same, the same stunning mountains stretching into the open sky, and the same cheerful town, and the same camp, only more shacks are added to it, and it's more bulging and overrunning with soldiers. This time I saw more drilling and marching and met a greater number of the men.

Also, I refreshed my memory on a great many points such as rifle drill and signaling and different formations. It is dreadful to think of Tommy having to be such a good housekeeper all by him-

self in his quarters. I used to love it when he left his things around and I could pick them up. Now he has to clean off all his own spots, of course, and keep his camp equipment in order and hundreds of things it is too bad a husband of mine, brought up like a gentleman, should have to do day out and day in, with no rest from it.

I was all by myself without Mrs. Richardson to chaperon me, and for the first time since it happened I felt just a little bit married. The waiters didn't even call me "Miss—Madam—" as usual, but were very decorous. Tommy was also very respectful. He talked more intellectually with me than he has ever done. He went over maps of the different fronts with me and explained things about the campaigns in a way that made them really interesting, and we discussed Russia and the different war aims of the nations and had a beautiful and very sympathetic time of it.

In our mutual dreams there is a little vine-hung bungalow on a country lane, with a ditto hung garage just beyond it, and many fancy

breeds of chickens, some prize police dogs and a collie for me. There is a big fireplace, big enough to heat the surrounding country and everything is very just right about it. This comes of our having lived in so many different hotel rooms partly, and partly it comes from natural selection. I want it hung in tan and rose color with a little dull blue in the decorations. I make a very good-looking room though I say it as shouldn't. It would show Tommy off to the most beautiful advantage, either in or out of khaki. Recently I have added another room to those we had planned—in my own private dream, that is.

"Tommy," I said to him in our placid and plushy room at the Wetherill house, "what shall we put on the top floor of 'The Rookie'?"—which is its foolish name.

"Ain't going to be any top floor, is there?"

"Sure, for an—attic, and things like that."

"What other things are like an attic?"

"Oh, I don't know. Store rooms."

"Same thing."

"Tommy," I said. "Can I have a room on the top floor to put anything I want to in?"

"Ya-ah."

But he didn't ask me what I might want to be going to put in it. So I didn't tell him.

I tried another tack soon after.

"My friend Lester Price is a pacifist, you know, but he says that even if he weren't and were married he wouldn't believe it was right to go to war if he had given any hostages to fortune."

"Has your friend Lester a copy of *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*?"

"I don't know."

"We might give him one for Christmas."

"Let's not josh each other," I said. "What do you think about that?"

"About what?"

"What Lester says."

"Oh! I suppose men with families have to settle that for themselves."

"I suppose they do," I said.

"Beth," Tommy said suddenly, "you had some regular boys in love with you, rich guys that could have given you the earth."

"Well," I said, "I told you about Lester."

"He could have left you provided for."

"Whaddje mean provided for?" We get very lax in our English at times when we're alone together.

"Whatever happened to him he could have been sure what would happen to you."

"No, he couldn't," I said. "If I had married Lester I nor he wouldn't have been sure what would happen in any case. Besides," I said, "there is only one man who could have given me the earth."

"And who was he?" asked Tommy teasingly.

"The one that gave it to me," I replied convincingly.

Billy Douglas says that the intelligence of a man is very limited, and in a certain sense I think perhaps this may be true. They are surely not very quick at understanding hints and subtle—

or is that subtile—suggestions, unless you make them much more broadly than you have any desire to.

When Tommy is very tired I fold him up in a blanket and put him to sleep, patting him of course, and treating him as if he were in reality a small boy of mine. He likes this and it rests him. I suppose most married people wouldn't be so childish in the things they do, but Tommy needs having a mother for a wife on account of his being so dependent on being made comfy and having his ruffled feathers smoothed out. Well, after we came back from motoring that Sunday night, (Tommy doesn't have to go motoring with the Teddy Godfreys now, thank goodness, and says he will see them very unpolitely further first) I first performed the kind office of putting my husband to sleep and then got very homesick for him to wake up again. So finally I put out the light and thought I would lie down beside him for a while. While I was doing so it suddenly came over me that I might not see him again for some time, and also that the duration of the

war was a long, long time. I therefore did what one would naturally do under the circumstances—cried.

But after a while I stopped crying and took my sleeping husband in my arms and kissed him, to which he replied:

"Squads right. March. Halt."

"Tommy," I said, "we are going to have a little baby."

"Unfix bayonets," Tommy said. "Strike tents and parry."

I kissed him again, quite relieved at what I had said to him.

"Was I talking in my sleep?" he said when he woke up.

"Yes, dear," I said meekly.

"What did I say?"

"Your conversation was rather mixed," I said.

"I hope I didn't miss anything of importance?" he suggested playfully. "Nobody's eyes got bigger or bluer while I was sleeping."

"They got something in them," I said truthfully, "but I dried them away for you."

"Not real ones?"

"No—baby ones," I said.

"You are not a crying woman, are you, dear?"

"Well, more or less I am," I said, "lately—since—"

But Tommy wasn't listening to that.

"Oh! Beth," he said, "I've been trying to remember to ask you, do you remember the name of that—that powder solvent that you can leave in the rifle barrel after you clean it—that stuff I told you about when I first came up here?"

"Why, yes, it was Hopp's—number nine," I said.

CHAPTER X

AUGUST

I AM trying to get a good grip on this war again for Tommy's sake. I must admit it got rather overlaid in my own mind with my own and other affairs. I think a lot of people feel the same way about it. You can't see the woods of war for the trees of head-lined debates and discussion. Secretary Baker gets blindfolded and puts in his thumb and pulls out the first rather bitter—to some people—plum of the draft, and his picture is in all the papers. Russia revolutes and revolutes, and gets an army of women with bobbed hair. Mr. Hoover becomes our official Old Mother Hubbard and takes charge of the National Cupboard—no disrespect intended—and hordes of well-dressed women that never spent a summer in New York before in their life drive and drive and drive to help to get money for

military purposes—mother among them—doing pretty nearly her durndest.

If anybody says suddenly to you in the midst of all this energetic endeavor, some little thing about the war, you almost look up and say "What war?"—just the way you feel on the subway in Times Square about "Watch your step,"—the guards chant it until you can't hear it at all. Still the fact remains that seventeen nations are at war with Germany and she's holding out like the friskiest thing you can imagine. They have a lot of nice little new ideas like liquid fire, and numerically the young ones are growing up so that it just looks as if they could never be disposed of fast enough even if there were seventeen hundred nations against them. I wish there were. Still you know I personally believe that all the reports are too good to be true—of them—I mean. They are probably just on their last stretch of morale, and when their morale goes—*they're gone.*

Speaking of morale makes me think of poor Lester. He nearly got arrested the other night

for speaking violently of peace in a public restaurant and having a man with him, Pedro Blumenstein, who wasn't going to rise to the national anthem. He wasn't a socialist or anything, though living on Washington Square South, but he claimed that the words of *The Star Spangled Banner* were not beautiful enough to have him pay them the tribute of rising. He said he was a poet, and therefore offended by them. When they found out who Lester's father was they let him go and his friend too. I feel Lester very heavily on my mind when he does things like that.

"Think of the wrong this war has done to the moral sense of mankind," he said. "Every war is an outrage on humanity, but war in our day and generation, as never before in man's history, is a crime."

"You left out something, Lester," I said wickedly.

"Left out something?—"

"Yes, out of Hall Caine. That's where you got it, wasn't it?"

"What difference does it make where I get it if it's what I believe?"

"Lester," I said, "are you so terribly sure what you believe? I'm not."

"Aren't you?" he said. "Why, I thought you were. But you do adhere to the military ideal."

"Yes."

"You think this war is right."

"I think it is necessary. I'll tell you. If an insane neighbor was beating his wife or anybody else's wife and cruelizing his children one couldn't sleep safe and snug in one's bed. You'd never forget or forgive yourself if you didn't try to mix in."

"I—might," said Lester, "if I thought it was right."

"You would go and beat up anybody that was committing a crime."

"Well, I suppose I would," Lester admitted. He isn't timid—only thoughtful. "Is that why you want your husband to go? Just for an abstract idea like that?"

"All your ideas are abstract, Lester," I reminded him. "Yes, that's why I would want him to go."

"My friend Blumenstein says that all patriotism is merely neurosis. I don't think yours is, Elizabeth. I—I think it's very noble."

"Thank you, Lester," I said. "I'm not so terribly noble, though. I'm not doing anything for the war really."

"What more could you do? You've given it your husband, and you've been very active about eating war bread, and the Red Cross and all that. I think you have been fine about it."

"I don't know what," I said, "but I've had a kind of feeling for a long time as if the war wanted something else of me, if you can understand what I mean."

"You haven't got anything more to give," Lester reminded me practically.

"No more material things. There are certain feelings you have to give up too. I can't exactly explain, but there are ways in which I am a pig

about the war. I don't put it first, for one thing," I declared.

"You should worry," said Lester weakly, but he looked very ill at ease. "You speak as if the war were a thing—a kind of Frankenstein or something."

"Well, isn't it?"

"It isn't alive."

"It isn't *dead,*" I said. "I think it's a big avenging angel with wings that hang over the world. I know that's symbolism, but why not?"

"I never heard you talk like that before," Lester argued.

"I never felt like that before," I said shortly.

It's true, though. The war wants something that it's not getting. Well, I've given it Tommy for about an average of twenty-seven days out of every four weeks. That's about all I've got. I must eat more fish and chicken.

Nobody in this world ever worked any harder than Tommy is working or got any tireder of what he was doing—and wanted to finish—than Tommy is. He is coming home to me very soon.

I don't *know,* of course,—he'll have to go where he is sent,—but I have a sort of hunch that I can keep him nearer to me now that I need him most. Whichever camp he is sent to I can go and live near. A great many officers will probably never get over to the other side on account of their being so useful here. Tommy says that one of the best things about the new army is the perfect genius displayed in picking the men for different positions—that men who are good leaders are selected by all kinds of artful methods that work like a charm. For instance, at Plattsburg a man is carefully sounded and tried out about his ability to pick other good men, and if he can do it they know he will make a good officer. I imagine Tommy would make a very good and patient teacher, and that he will be obliged to go on teaching indefinitely. Poor Tommy, he won't altogether like that, but I think when I catch him awake and tell him what he and I have to expect of the future that he'll be rather glad to realize it is true. Besides I feel wuzzier and wuzzier at times, and I want him to know.

We never can tell what is going to happen to us, can we?

I was going to have Tommy go to Camp Yaphank—name and all, mortifying as it would be to have a husband at it. I was going to encamp near him and have him all to myself for one day a week, and spend the rest of the time loving him and providing little luxuries for his comfort. I was going to have him for mine, now. Well, I guess the war did want something more of me, and has got all it's going to get. One can bear such things of course, and it's only decent to give up when you know it's the big thing. War is hell, but there is something about doing your part that helps you through it.

To begin at the beginning Tommy got his commission—a captaincy. I was very disappointed that he wasn't a major at first, but he explained to me that he didn't think he ought to be a major yet. He is always very modest. But I know that a major sits in his quarters and directs things from behind the lines while a captain has to lead his men over the top. He prom-

ised, however, to get to be a major as soon as possible, and while I know that he is only kidding me about it, still it is much more comfortable to have him do so.

Well, he came home to me with the bells on, and spent three seraphic days in our fiendishly hot apartment. I must say that he has the most beautiful nature any human being ever had, and the most considerate manners, even to his own wife, in weather that makes a devil almost of every man.

At the end of that time he said to me without any preliminary: "Beth, I want to volunteer for special service and go over with the crowd that's going over now, shall I?"

"Why do you want to do that?" I said.

"I'm crazy to get there."

"To the front?"

"It would take three months of training at least in France. I want to get it over. You've no idea how tedious the work here gets, or how helpless you feel training—training while those devils over there—"

"Well, I have," I temporized, "from your letters. The war comes first to you, doesn't it, Tommy?" I added.

"First, last and all the time."

"Where do I come in?"

"You don't come in—you're *me*. See?"

"So we can be separated, you mean, without it making much difference?"

"So we can never be separated?"

"Well, I guess we can't," I said.

"Do I go?"

"Take me with you."

"That might be arranged. It might be fixed up for you to come over later with that Douglas girl. You could take up one of the shorter nursing courses and get ready pretty quick. Of course, nobody has any business over there now unless they can be of use."

"Oh! do you think I could?" I cried. Then I remembered. "It would probably be better if I stayed at home with my mother," I said. "There are things to do here."

"I only thought you might want to. I'd feel safer if you were with your parents."

"It isn't the safeness," I said.

"I only suggested it. I don't know what I'll strike, of course. God knows I don't want you anywhere that I can't personally look out for you."

"I don't want you anywhere that you can't, Tommy," I said.

"Well," he said, holding me off to look at me somewhat later in the conversation, "do I go?"

"Of course," I said.

We had a week—seven days and three hours—together after it was settled, though we did not know how long it was going to be until the last minute of course.

Mother and father went off to the seashore—he for a week and she for the rest of August and September, on account of being fortunate enough to be invited to stay that long and being worn to a frazzle, or something as near a frazzle, whatever it is, as mother could ever be. We were

housekeeping by ourselves. We decided not to count off hours and minutes but to live out those days as if they had no beginning and no end, and so we did. The weather fortunately got quite cool and comfortable. Cook got amiable, and Bessie positively angelic, especially since we used to send her away and wait on ourselves at dinner about all the time. So for the first time we were together and really comfortable, without being rushed to death. Even the honeymoon week, Tommy was doing so much business all the time that we had to snatch our time in between it, but now we could loaf and invite our souls, and as Tommy said—they came.

I felt as if I had never had my husband before. I never knew him before. I never remotely dreamed that any one could be—so nice. When you love a person at first you don't care how nice they are or aren't especially, as long as they are yours, and you can be a pig about them; but that feeling changes. You find you have to have faith in what they are outside of what they are to you. If they didn't have a certain amount of

nobility you would feel degraded—you couldn't help it. It was very fortunate for me that I happened to get my eye on Tommy instead of on somebody less worthy. I just don't see how I could have stood loving anybody else, or how I could have borne being parted from any one who was less wonderful. When Tommy goes abroad I go—in his veins, and when I stay here quietly waiting for something he doesn't know is going to happen, he is beside me every time I draw a breath. I suppose it would be too much to ask of God to feel like that about your husband and have him with you too.

"Tommy," I said, along about the first day. On account of trying not to be a human hour-glass I don't know *exactly* when anything happened, though having the kind of mind that usually knows, I can hit it pretty near in looking back.—"There is something in my soul that I am not telling you."

"Yes, dear."

"Shall I tell you now?"

"Yes, please."

"I don't feel the way you do about the war." It's funny how easy it is to say the hard things when you get right down to them.

"Don't you? How do you feel?"

"I don't care about it the way I do about you."

"I should hope you didn't."

"Why?"

"The war is a damnable business."

"Joan of Arc put it before everything."

"Joan of Arc was a new woman."

"I am a new woman."

"Not that kind of new."

"This—this—it worries me, Tommy. I am not one with you, am I,—if I don't put the war first?"

"Do you think for one minute that I put the war first in that sense?"

"Why, yes."

"I don't put anything first,—but you. There is love and there is work. Sometimes we sacrifice one for the other—God knows—but there's no comparison."

"I thought there was," I said, "and ought to be."

"No," Tommy said, "no," and he groaned. So that was off my mind.

Another time I got worried about being a sport, and told him that.

"I am *afraid* to be without you," I told him at night, waking him out of a sound sleep, I am ashamed to say, to confide it to him. "When certain things happen to me I am afraid I am going to be too much afraid." If he had been in full possession of his faculties he might have understood this too well, but being still practically in the arms of Morpheus he didn't get the significance of it. I had made up my mind not to tell about Obadiah—I call it Obadiah to myself—because I felt it would make it harder for him to go, and of course I didn't want to worry him any further. "I am not a sport, dear," I said. "And I am afraid I get a great deal of credit for it under false pretenses."

"You are a sport," he said drowsily and quarrelsomely.

"Tommy," I said, "would you mind waking up—awfully?"

"I should," he said, "but I will. What is it, dear?"

"I am not a sport," I said, "I am going to be afraid to be without you. I want you to know that."

"My God," Tommy said. "I have never known a sport in the world but you, but you must not wake in the middle of the night, and think of things after I am *gone*. It will ruin your health. Healthy human beings can't afford to do that. There's something about the middle of the night that will put you on the bum if you aren't careful. We'll neither of us *survive*, dear, if we live through too many of them consciously."

"I've heard that your vitality was at lowest ebb then," I said.

"I'm afraid that I'm going to be afraid, too, dear," he whispered after a long time. "That damned front line."

"You won't be, Tommy," I said.

Then, "I won't be, Tommy," I promised him.

I am going to keep my promise. It was criminal to wake him out of his lovely sleep when in a little while more the "cooties" will be doing it, I suppose; but that was the most comforting conversation we had, I think. I can live by it as if it was a little light we had set going. Two people couldn't be any closer than we were after we had said those things to each other, and the funny thing was that we both went right to sleep in the middle of knowing it.

I thought we might be going to have the eighth day together after all. All day on the seventh we sat gaspingly waiting for the notification that Tommy's boat was to sail, but it didn't come. Father was in town at his club at the end of the telephone when he wasn't in his office ready to do anything that was required of him, but by that time I had decided in my own mind that Tommy wouldn't be called to go for another ten days or so. I don't know why I had, but I had.

Tommy took me in his arms before he told me, but of course he had told me by merely doing so.

"It's to-night," he said, "we go on board to-night."

"Well," I said.

"Be brave, dear."

"I am," I said.

"I'm not," he said miserably. "Oh! Beth, Beth, Beth."

"We can do it," I said.

"You'd better come over."

"I will when I can," I said.

Fortunately we had to hustle to get him off and that took up our minds.

I didn't see the boat sail. Nobody knew when it sailed. I think I felt it sail at about four o'clock that next morning. If it wasn't that I don't know what it could have been.

Father took me down to the dock and so on to the boat. We were next of kin, and could go. At the last moment the Richardsons decided they couldn't stand it.

"Tommy," I said, "I am glad you married me. Think how perfectly terrible it would have been if I wasn't legally your next of kin." I had

to joke with him because he was so all in, poor Tommy. I have never seen him so cold—hands and face and neck and throat—and so miserably shivering I put my veil around his neck over his khaki collar and he let it be there. His breath came in long painful gasps, and he kept trying to control it.

"Tommy," I said, "you mustn't feel like this."

"I'm so cold," he said.

The boat was a rather smelly one, but it looked all right. Tommy's room was forward and comfortable.

"I wonder what kind of roommates I draw," he said, pointing to the different kit bags that were crammed in beside his. I never knew, of course.

It seems strange that he should have cried and I shouldn't when we kissed each other good-by.

"Dear, it's only for a little while, and we can bear it," I said.

"Beth," he said, "Beth, Beth, Beth. I never loved you till this minute. You're such a sport; you—you take it out of me."

"That will be all right," I said, still trying to cheer him up.

I don't know what our last words were. I guess they weren't anything. I gave poor father a dreadful time though, by going out of business in the taxicab.

CHAPTER XI

SEPTEMBER

FATHER came in unexpectedly one day and found me knitting with pink and white wool instead of the universal gray or brown. I had found the directions in a book and was sailing along quite unconcernedly with the garment it portrayed when I was caught at it.

"What are you knitting, Piggie?" he inquired carelessly.

"A—a soldier sweater," I said, and I held it up. Then I bent my head again quickly and went on working.

Father came over and stood beside me, looking down at me. He was very much affected.

"It's all right, daddy," I said, "don't worry."

"Have you told your mother?"

"I haven't told anybody. Doctor Fitch told me." I didn't think Roland counted—since he only guessed.

"Didn't Tommy know?"

"I thought it would give him too much to be anxious about."

"So you let him go without telling him."

"Do you think that was very wicked?" I said.

"He might not have gone if he had known."

"Yes, that was what I was afraid of."

Father held out his arms to me. I tried to go into them on account of not hurting his feelings, but I didn't get it accomplished.

"I can't about that," I said, "not yet."

Father's eyes filled.

"My funny, brave, wise, little daughter," he said.

"Oh! I can about *that,*" I said and we hugged each other vociferously.

He wanted to send for mother in the country and have her come home at once and be told. He wanted to send me to the country, et cetera, but I said:

"Father, I want to stay right on this one spot where letters and cables will reach me quickest, and not be bothered."

And he saw my point.

I was perfectly calm about Tommy's being on the water. I used to imagine circumstantially how it would be if a submarine periscope poked its nose above water and the passengers heard a dull report and saw a thick cloud of smoke, and then all was confusion and panic and darkness, but the picture didn't get me at all. I knew it wasn't going to happen. I was sure beyond all reason that such a danger could not be. I read all the submarine reports too, and it wasn't because so many of the transports had reached the other side safely. It was just my feeling, and it was the right one too. In due time we got a cable merely dated *Sans Origine* which I thought at first must be a desert island or something, that said "Arrived safely." Imagine a cable from my Tommy marked *Sans Origine*. If that was without origin then nothing in this world has any. I shall have letters soon, and letters from Tommy are beautiful and living things. Any one who has not had letters from Tommy can not know how warming and strengthening they are. The

unworthy idea is with me that I shall have to let Mrs. Richardson read them, and that she will show them to Mrs. Godfrey. "Does it matter?" I say to myself again and again, and the answer is always, "Yes, it does matter. It matters awfully." I have not been to see Mrs. Richardson for a while now. I am afraid she will make a fuss over me and I don't want her to.

Going to France—father says Tommy probably landed at Boulogne—seems a terrible thing in prospect, but when you have actually done it by proxy it doesn't seem so bad. There we are, Tommy in the flesh and me in the spirit, with our composite feet on the soil of France. It's a queer thing that France doesn't choke you up now so much as it used to before we got in. It's our happy hunting-ground now, and we're going over there to hunt the Hun.

"Over there—over there—
And we won't come back till it's over—over there."

I don't want Tommy to be too bitterly disappointed, but I rather agree with Lester that the war is practically finished now. The press is full of peace feelers. The German reply to the Pope had a very specious and fishy sound,—but still the argument goes on, and still the Germans want to talk about it, and this talking about it, seems to me, shows which way the wind blows. Tommy won't think it is right, I know, but still if it comes he will come back to me, and we can talk it over together.

Father says that if the war ends now, America will be spoiled for life; that if we once get the idea that our just holding up our hand is enough to stop a war, we will never be any good again in any way. He says that we are cock-sure and unthorough and otherwise objectionable enough now, nationally speaking, but that if the war is disposed of by our intervention before we've had any real chance to fight, why, we might just as well adopt *Something for Nothing* as our slogan and give up trying to pretend we're any good at all. He raves and raves over our national streak

of yellow and the way we are now showing it in various ways. I know Tommy wouldn't think so, but then he wouldn't think the war was going to stop either. He won't believe it when it does unless Germany just announces that she's beaten, herself, and willing to *deliquesce* from the map. (*Deliquesce*—evaporate *à la* the homely snail when you put salt on him.)

I suppose I rather slump in my highest feelings when Tommy isn't with me. I am going to try to be all that he expects of me, and just as brave as he is but I am not going to begin right away. I am going to indulge my lower feelings just long enough to get somewhat rested in my highest ones. I am doing practical things like getting up money for the library drive. I think it is fine to buy the soldiers books, because they can be used in civil life afterward.

Doctor Fitch and I have nice little conversations together. He says I am healthy, and I think I am now. He says that he thinks I will find that I will grow very fond of Obadiah. I suppose I shall be, but gracious, there's a whole

lot to be considered about him. I guess he can have a local habitation with my family, and a name—*pro tem* and *sur*—has been already provided for him, but after all—who is he going to be anyway? A baby at first, I suppose, and then a person—like other persons. The whole business is very queer and a trifle alarming. I don't think about it very much—especially not in the middle of the night. Obeying Tommy's orders about midnight machinations of the brain.

I wonder what good there is in this going to hear music, and strengthening your mentality and doing things like that? I've given up coffee and tea and setting-up exercises though I do take a few of the milder ones. Also I've stopped fooling with guns in any way. I think that I will take a chance on strengthening my mentality and not try to improve myself artistically and musically. You would feel so foolish going to a concert or an art exhibition with a direct end of that kind in view. I don't see why it isn't a good idea to behave just as naturally as you possibly can and leave the rest to Fate. Everybody always says,

"My parents never consulted me about coming into the world,"—but—how could they? There are lots of things that I would like to get Obadiah's views on with relation to our mutual future together, but it can't be done. So as George says, "Why worry?"

Eileen is trying her best to get me to go over with her, and thinks I'm a weak sort of piker not to be willing to. She knows I could work it if I wanted to. "Man proposes and God disposes," but it doesn't do her any good to tell her that, unless I tell her *what* God disposes, and if I did that—she'd *know*.

"How could you let Tommy go to the front?" Dolly Grainger keeps asking me. "Why didn't you use your influence with the men of your family to keep them out of this horrid war? It's all right now that they can parade around and wear a uniform, but when we are at peace again —what then? They will have lost so many years of their lives with nothing to show for it."

"Do you talk that way to Roland?" I asked her.

"Well, you know how men *are*," she said, "they are crazy to get into any kind of excitement without stopping to think how much trouble they are going to have before they get out of it."

"*Do* you talk that way?" I said.

"Do you?" she asked.

"I don't feel that way," I said.

"But you don't talk the way you do feel—whatever it is—to any man or boy, do you?"

"Pretty near," I said, "to Tommy."

"Oh, go on! I'll bet you've got the biggest kind of a secret from him right now."

I opened my mouth to reply,—but what's the use of trying to answer "yes" or "no" to any question of Dolly's. Conversation, after all, isn't a mere kind of trick to catch you in.

"I heard of a new atrocity the other day," she continued flightily which is her fashion, "a horror! Want to hear about it?"

"No," I said, "I don't."

"I don't think marriage has improved you a great deal, Betty"—I hate being called Betty—she said, "to put it frankly."

"Well, don't put it frankly, then," I said.

Whereupon our conversation terminated, with mutual ill feeling.

Billy Douglas is circulating around in the same breathless and intriguante fashion. Robert has not yet been called—to Eileen's shame. She did so want him to enlist and get a good start at something before it came to his hanging on like this. But Billy wouldn't have it. I don't know what is going to happen to Billy. She has so much good in her that I am interested to see if any of it will now be brought out. She is being very nice to Marcella Harcourt whom she met at my house for the first time early in the spring. I'm glad of that for Marcella is a nice girl, and her heart is broken, though she is filling up her life quite capably with other things. If she were married and had Obadiah to look forward to—would she feel better or worse? Better, I think.

New York meantime is full of Japanese and all Fifth Avenue is strung with moon-shaped lanterns and cleverly arranged decorations. Viscount Ishii is making speeches and genuflections

all over the place about our polite action in getting into the fray. Since but a short time ago there was a good deal of conjecture about the prospect of Japan engaging in a little fray with us on the side, this is very gratifying, though of course it doesn't really mean a thing. So few things do along that line. The perfidious Germans would have sent a commission over here if it had been possible, I suppose. Speaking of perfidious Germans, Fräulein was over to see us the other day. We had a fight over Sweden, which I know nothing at all about, and a slight argument about the Kaiser's God, for which I could have had her arrested if I had had a mind to. She certainly can be disagreeable about England—good old England, and she is.

"The whole point of the matter is, Fräulein," I said, "that you come from a race of—of scientific barbarians, and you don't have any imagination about people whose feelings are naturally refined," and with that I left her. It is the whole point, too. I was so mad because she said that the Germans had practically captured the Gulf of

Riga that I could have done anything to her. I am afraid poor Obadiah has chosen one very belligerent parent at least.

A letter from Tommy at last,—opened by that horrid, never to be forgiven or tolerated creature—the censor. All my letters to Tommy and Tommy's letters to me have to be opened and read and words scratched out in them by that abominable person, and it isn't always the same censor, either. I can't tell now what certain spots on the letters mean; whether they are Tommy's bread and butter or his tears, or merely traces of an official lack of refinement against which there is no defense.

"Somewhere in France." Well, he landed, and he loves me, censor or no censor. He isn't very much of a describer, of course, but I gather that a lot of other people landed with him or were already there when he arrived! He didn't have much excitement going over but the food was unexpectedly good, and the boat unexpectedly unsteady—in other words he was seasick,—though he didn't say so, and got better and

ate the food after a suitable interval. He heard tales of pseudo lifeboats with fake men in them concealing periscopes and torpedoes in their midst, and was a little disappointed at not sighting one. Well, thank heavens! he didn't.

What will he see before he gets home to me? I refuse to read about the war any more, but once or twice in Brentano's I've snooped about the tables and read the literature on the covers of some of the personal narratives. "Two years in Hell and *back* with a smile." Dozens of books by men who have *come back*. Tommy will come back of course. I have never had the smallest moment of doubt about that, but sometimes I get into a regular cowardly panic about what he may get into before he does. Well, there will be some months of training before he gets anywhere near the front lines,—and in those months what may not happen? I have done my duty. I have. Supposing peace coming now *is* only a patched up peace and our not finishing the business now will mean that war will break out again in a worse form? Tommy and I might not live to see it.

We'd have our time together,—but Obadiah might have to go to war in that case. Well, that's a thought. Still Obadiah is only Obadiah —and Tommy is Tommy.

Sometimes I get to wondering if I'm grown up enough to love Tommy the way I do without —spontaneous combustion or something. I hadn't got my hair up on the top of my head when I knew that Tommy was all there was to it. I knew it in my soul before I ever acknowledged it to my brain. In fact, I told him so before I ever told myself. Now I can just barely manage to live without him. I *can* manage but it's rather up-hill work and dwarfs everything else. My love grows bigger all the time, and I am a very small container for it. I have awful hours sometimes when I dread the suffering of caring the way I care, and am going on caring. Just the waiting around for letters and the longing—longing for my dearest. Even a grown-up woman would have all she could do to stand it. There are lots of other girls' husbands "Somewhere in France," but they can bear it because their hus-

bands are only commonplace husbands. Mine is Tommy.

"'Nother Place in France." He loves me just as much. It's sweet of him to ignore the censor on my behalf. I guess he knows I couldn't live if he didn't. He seems to be in a kind of jumble of mud and getting settled, and meeting all kinds of natives from all the countries of the earth, Zouaves and Singalese and the Foreign Legion—whatever they may be,—and hobnobbing with majors and staff colonels and people like that. Anyhow, he describes them with considerable pride. He makes light of any discomforting experiences he might have had. So far no *cooties*. The soldiers I have read letters or reports from on the subject take these animals very much as a matter of course, but they are one of the things I can't help thinking about in the tabooed midnight hours. It doesn't seem possible that Tommy could be going to have to suffer from them. Maybe he won't. He's heard shell fire in the distance like a subway explosion and didn't mind it. His letter was so sort of fresh and crisp

sounding that I had a kind of thrill of joy at having let him go. Supposing he was just plodding along here, and then got drafted and then was dragged around this country—half unwillingly because he hadn't had the strength of mind to take the initiative. Oh! No, if you're going to play ball,—you want to play ball—that's all. Tommy thinks the whole outlook over there is very confused but very promising. The men are crude and untutored—but keen. They'll lick into shape like a breeze, and then "Over the Top and give 'em Hell," and it's Oblivion or Berlin for poor little Fritzie. Oh! Obadiah! Obadiah! if it wasn't for you I could get in line for a French Cross of my own. As it is, we'll let your father do the honors for the family. He's capable of it. I guess I've never called him that before, but that's what he is, Obadiah, your patriarchal, and I trust your also fond and doting parent.

Lester came around to see how I was getting on. He made strange financial allusions at inter-

vals from which I presently inferred that he wanted to present me with some money.

"Lester," I said, "what do you think I am? An East Side woman in a shawl?"

"I can't tell you what I think you are," he rejoined with some spirit, "you're married now."

"And a good job, too," I murmured.

"I don't care how facetious you may get," he said, "I just want you to know that I've come into some money of my own, and it can be loaned to you, and never be repaid of course, in time of need. If anything should happen to your father's business—"

"My father's business?" I said.

"All businesses excepting munitions are on the blink, you know."

"Have you heard of anything happening to my father's business?" I asked, remembering father's expression of late.

"Well, rumors get around, you know," he said.

"Well, Lester," I said, "if the time ever comes

when I have to have money for anything special, and I can't get it of any one else I will appeal to you."

"Thank you," he said huskily.

"But don't you see, Lester, it would be a queer thing to do. I like—love my husband just the way that you said—that you—"

"I know you do," Lester said. "That's the reason that I want to help you. I—I want you to be happy."

"Lester," I said, "I've never half appreciated you."

"That's all right," he said.

But it isn't all right. I have broken Lester's heart, and Tommy, my liege lord and sovereign master, has my heart with him—over there, "Somewhere in France."

I think Life is tragic.

CHAPTER XII

OCTOBER

WELL, the other night I got out of my warm bed with the comforting blue puff folded over me like an envelope of which I was the long and I trust somewhat interesting contents, and closing the window at which a blizzard was entering with undue celerity, I sat down in my kimono and bare toes, and wrote Tommy about Obadiah. The time had come to do it. I couldn't have done it before or put it off any later.

"Dear Tommy," I said. "Please close your eyes and imagine your lawful wedded lady friend in her lawful accustomed place telling you something; and please imagine what it is." *A line of stars.* "Have you?" *More stars.* "Are you glad? I am, I think. Please tell me in so many words that you know what I mean. Put it down on

paper. I can't because of the censor, and I couldn't anyway.

"That's why I couldn't think of going abroad when you broached the question. That's why my health acted up so. I am perfectly normal now, however, eating, sleeping and not worrying, and Doctor Fitch looks after me and talks things over.

"I think I know where your last letter was from. Father of course follows your supposed trail with maps all the time. Personally, I want to see you." *A line of tears,* which, however, I don't think spotted. "I have no secrets from you now, so I will tell you that I like you better than the war. You needn't nevertheless turn around and come home before you have had a crack at Fräulein's compatriots. My nerve is pretty good, thank you. I guess we both meant it when we promised not to be afraid. So let's make a bargain not to worry. You are in the locket around my neck. Really in it. Am I inscribed on your identification disk or am I in the case of your

wrist watch? The answer is 'neither.' I know I am beating in your heart—Oh! Tommy, my Tommy, you are beating in mine.

"Lovingly, The Gazelle." (I try to be a little funny at the end of my letters so he will finish them with a smile.)

"P. S. He is going to be very nice."

When I got back into bed I thought I had perhaps killed myself by writing it at all. I shivered and shook and went into a thousand pieces as I have never done before, but I suppose it was just nervousness. At any rate, I lived to tell the tale.

Roland is off to France with the artillery detachment for which he elects to be a gunner. His mother, who is very fond of him I guess, but not very well acquainted with him on account of leading such a busy life among our well-known social circles, made an awful scene on the dock and had to be gagged and bound as it were, before they could get her home. Roland when he came here kissed my forehead and my hands and told

me to be good, and I told him that next to Tommy he was the one that seemed to me to have the goods.

"Well, then," he said, "I'll deliver them."

"Cross your heart," I said.

"Cross yours," he promised.

"You're—my family Bible, you know, Beth," he said, "you—you are getting to look like a madonna now."

"I'll let you call me Beth then," I said, which is really Tommy's name for me.

"You *are* getting to look like a madonna."

I closed my eyes.

"Well," I said, "pray for me then."

"I will," he said huskily; and I knew he would.

George is still hanging around the docks like a regular wharf rat and nothing happens to his part of the naval service. He says he would have got more out of it if he had taken service as a porter on a Fall River line steamer, but I suppose his time will come. His mother, being poor but honest like my own, seems better able to

bear up under the idea than Roland's parents, though she is quite intimate with him.

Speaking of mothers, mine was very good to me when she got home from the country. She and father seemed to have a reunion over my affairs, and it gave them a great deal in common to talk over. I always like to see my dear parents getting together over something congenial. Mother was a little broken up because I hadn't found her more necessary to my scheme of existence under the circumstances, but as I pointed out to her there was nothing to do about it, except to smile and make up plenty of good-looking garments.

"I'm not very close to you, Beth," she said, "you used to tell me everything."

"I don't need to tell anybody anything, now," I said. "I don't do those things that I have to confide and be forgiven for. I have put away childish things, perhaps."

"You've grown beyond me."

I kissed her but did not contradict her. I'm a war scarred veteran now in my secret soul.

The war got what it was after from me. Mother's just played with it. We don't speak just exactly the same language.

"Mother," I said, "let father go."

She stared at me.

"Nonsense," she said, "there's nothing he could do at his age."

"Let him try," I said; "give him the satisfaction of finding it out for himself."

"Don't be silly," she said. "What would we do?"

"I don't know," I said, "but I'd be willing to do it if you would."

It was no use, though. Mother is perfectly sweet, and does all the minor details of her duty, but she wouldn't give up the *last* thing, or know that it was there to give up. She's right for her, and I am right for me, I suppose. I wish we could trade even.

There seems to be practically no sugar in the world, and one's grocer sells one a pound reluctantly. Mother has evolved a little scheme of

tipping with sugar. We use as little as possible, and get it from three or four places, so now when the cook or the scrub lady or the elevator man needs a little bonus mother gives them a pound of sugar where she formerly gave them fifty cents, and they are much more grateful to her than they ever were for the mere lucre. The poor simply can't get sugar. We are beginning to have meatless days, and wheatless days, and I am so corn fed that cock-a-doodle-do will soon be my natural form of expression. Before mother came home I got the household running on this war basis. Honey, and only half the wheat we used to eat, and no meat for lunches and never any kind of waste. I am quite executive when I turn my mind to it, and though I manage to cook by the Montessori method I must say that it works fine.

Some day, some day will my Tommy be a civilian and shall we sit down to a snowy little table-cloth hemmed by me, with a deft meal originated by me set before us, with nobody else any-

where around and our own housekeeping arrangements than which nothing could be more ornamental, spread all around us,—high chair and all?

Roses clambering all over our roof, and high set leaded windows with little white curtains blown lightly by the wind, and a slight litter of me and Tommy and our respective dogs and golf sticks and—and Obadiahs spread all over the place. This is certainly a very logical want. It sounds rather messy, but it wouldn't be. I am a very neat housekeeper, but not a fidget. I could make Tommy love it so.

More letters from Tommy. Telling me about a great many things that I don't know anything about, but ought to. He's beginning to talk French as a part of the day's work. *"Jusqu'au bout,"* he says at intervals. *"Jusqu'au bout."* To the end, that means. To the end—what end? Oh! my God—can't that end come pretty soon? I don't mean to swear, but there isn't any other way to say some things. *"Coûte que coûte."* Cost what it may.

"We're beginning to think, now that we are actually on the spot," Tommy says, "that it's up to the people who are not in uniform to win this war. There's something that's got to beat Prussian concentration at its own game, on its own level. Spirit—that's what it's got to be. Unfailing, unflagging, untiring inspiration behind the endeavor. Every man, every woman of the Allied nations has got to put himself or herself into the effort. We've got to believe in our war every waking and sleeping minute. Then God will back us up. It's God and the devil waging war. That's what it is."

Tommy, Tommy, Tommy, I'm trying to keep my end up. I'm not so whole-souled about it as you are, but I'll try.

"We're in billets now, and consistently busy. France certainly has been battered up a good deal. It would break your heart, and still it isn't quite as excruciating as you imagine it is going to be. There's something encouraging even about a

hole in the earth that is healing itself over, and these devastated towns and broken people are now in the charge of those whose sacred trust it is to set the world going again, and make it right as nearly as possible. Those who are gone, are out of it. Those who survive have seen and known what they have, and yet have the triumph of survival. *C'est la guerre.*—Dear, it isn't all wrong, nor it isn't all right, but it isn't all—bad. Whatever you and I think about the war, we think this.

"You're first, though."

He puts that in his letters at intervals in memory of that midnight discussion we had. He knows what I want, and he says it.

"Sometimes, in fact most all of the time, I think it was sheer madness for me to have accepted a captaincy. It would have been better and wiser for me to have taken a lieutenancy, but it is too late now. A captain can't make mistakes, and get away with them. I am beginning to

realize the long list of mistakes there are and to quaver. Not really. I'm your Tommy that you put the heart into, and it's there, dear; it's there where you put it.

"I don't want to write too many descriptions of things, for fear you will be painfully visualizing the place I described in my letter before last, while I am in still quite another Somewhere in France, and loving you better than I did the time before, at which you are still sticking. It grows on me like anything, you know, all the time, especially when sleeping and dreaming. That we are together in our dreams goes without saying.

"Still here's where I burst into literature. We're near a town, just on the edge of it, quite a way back from the lines, but *en route*. It is all very, very dirty,—muddy, that is. I thought Plattsburg was muddy, but I didn't know the meaning of the word at that time. The town itself is very—chatty. The little shops are full of women with their tongues hung in the middle who start them going and then run about and leave them. They talk French suspiciously tinged

with (line deleted by the censor) also the most amazing English and the most extraordinary mixtures, as if they were trying to adapt a guttural unmusical French to the whole foreign legion at once. Chocolate costs about three francs a pound, and eating apples two francs a pound. These people of course have the Scotch skun a mile for what we will courteously term, thrift.

"The road leading north is the interesting thing. The lorries, guns and horse trains go by continually, also an occasional two wheeled *carrère* drawn by a mule, and the poor foot-slogging fellows bound forward to the lowest circle of mud. It's somehow very fascinating to watch that highway.

"It rains conscientiously every day at about four o'clock, and if the shower is a little late it makes up for it in pattering more smartly. This morning a battle-plane flew over our billet—not before we had had breakfast,—alas! it is never before breakfast here. After you've opened one eye in the black dark you do your chores and gob-

ble your food with no interim,—but somewhere along at about a normal breakfast time. In the distance I saw a lot of other—mosquitoes, that's all they look like, you know. They came nearer and there were bursts of smoke and *one* dropped, —an enemy I suppose. It was like watching a battle among educated fleas, they looked so little. See how hard your Tommy is trying to tell what he sees, and can't. I love you."

Well, I don't suppose any one ever got more satisfactory letters from "Somewhere in France" or so full of local color, which is what I call the "I love you" parts.

I am glad he isn't in Italy or in anyway concerned in that Italian offensive. Father is fretting about it as if it were happening in our own back yard, or should I say tiled court? Thirty thousand prisoners,—sixty thousand prisoners, eighty thousand prisoners! Thank Heaven you can't really visualize more than six individuals at once! Father Richardson has a theory that in a way is sort of comforting. He thinks that there

is treason in the Italian lines, that it is propaganda that has won a bloodless victory and that those Italians have simply surrendered with a wink. He's been talking with men just back from the Italian vicinity and Washington. Father of course won't listen to that. All men are heroes to him even if they are dagoes. Personally I don't know what to think. I would think what Tommy thought if he were here.

Eileen has gone. I flung her and Lester at each other's heads to no avail. She could have stood him after a while when age had mellowed them both and the cruel war was over and done with, and Requiescating in Peacefulness. He would have come up to the scratch even about the war if he had some woman to encourage him at first hand; but it wasn't to be. She is now on the high seas at the mercy of any German periscope that comes along, concealed in a fake lifeboat or not. I told her that she couldn't do anything toward propagating the race if she didn't try to love a prospective parent of it. I suppose

you can't make people love each other by just working it out in your own head, but I wish I could make those two. Lester is a living reproach to me.

Peter Ives is taking up aviation. He'll be going, I suppose.

"Forty-nine blue bottles were hanging on a wall,
Forty-nine blue bottles were hanging on a wall,
And one blue bottle fell down from the wall,
And forty-eight blue bottles were hanging on a wall."

Soon Obadiah and I will be the only ones left.

CHAPTER XIII

NOVEMBER AGAIN

WOMEN have got the vote, if you please. It was a complete surprise to me. Of course, I am a most ardent suffragist,—but I rather dread exercising my prerogatives at the polls, without Tommy here to tell me what they are. However, he'll certainly be home before another November and by that time we'll be wearing our laurels as if they were old hair ribbons. Mother is tremendously pleased. She has certainly worked hard to cause this effect.

"Congratulations, mother," I said.

"Now, we've got to fight Washington," she said wearily. Sometimes I think that women overreach themselves by this attitude of grabbing everything in sight and then trying to get more in addition, especially at a time like this, but mother says that it's all very necessary. Well,

she ought to know. She has been one longer than I have.

Tammany is in. *I* don't care so much. There must be some good in Tammany Hall, though every one but Father Richardson says it is unspeakable—but Tommy would grieve. He was so proud of New York after it got cleaned up politically. I was getting to the point of passing the time of day pleasantly with the policemen myself. I shan't take it for granted that they are worthy of these amenities under the new régime.

We are getting right down to brass tacks in other ways. It takes three cents to send a letter. We are a good deal more stringently meatless and wheatless than we were, and quite painfully sugarless. We are going to be coalless—more involuntarily so, and Broadway is going to be lightless. Gosh! I feel as if we were moving right up to the lines. It's sort of dreary. I hate semi-demi states of anything. I'd rather have New York candlelit entirely, than suddenly to emerge on Broadway and find it unexpectedly

dark where formerly there have been fizzy-water signs and butterflies, and soldier men saluting. I hate to be surprised by the absence of accustomed brilliance. That's not patriotic, but it's very hard to be suddenly dutifully reconciled to something entirely foreign to your taste, especially if it has been sprung on you without warning. Sometimes when we've had vegetable meat loaf on a Tuesday when I hadn't remembered our weekly meatlessness I've almost howled with vexatious disappointment, and yet I wouldn't have eaten a chop for a king's ransom. Human beings are certainly very inconsistent objects,—but they're awfully human all the time.

Well, my life is more of a problem than I ever expected any life of mine to be. Father is losing all his money and will soon be businessless. Mother refuses to face the music, not exactly refuses, but she's constitutionally incapable of looking a personal fact in the face. Father refuses to apply for help to Aunt Evelyn—Roland's mother, and there is nobody else. *C'est la guerre,*

as Tommy says. I don't know what we are going to do. I should normally have gone out to get a job at this juncture. I could almost live on what Tommy sends, but I gave that to his mother and father. Mother's idea is that I ought to have married Lester. Father's idea is that he ought to jump into the river. My idea is that the Lord will provide, and if at first you don't succeed in getting Him to, try, try again at some other angle. Hard times, Obadiah!

Being without Tommy, however, is my real problem. How to go on standing it. "I need thee every hour," is my perpetual song. Tommy is literally my other half, and how can a half a thing live and go on living when it's severed from itself? I asked Doctor Fitch if he could give me something to help me keep up this endurance test, and he said, "No," that life consisted of bearing more than you could all the time, and getting a great deal out of it.

"You don't think I've reached my limit, then, Doctor?" I said.

"You never will, dear," he said. "You are made of the stuff that endures beyond endurance."

"Do you think that's comforting?" I asked.

"You are not the kind of woman one tries to comfort," he said, "with anything but the truth."

"You don't know how I want my husband," I said. "I don't want to do myself any harm with it."

"Cry a little," he said, holding out his arms.

"No," I said.

"Why not?"

"I might cry too hard."

His own eyes filled with tears. He is very sweet to me, but apparently he doesn't *know*. No one does. Tommy!

I did, however, arrange with him not to pay him any money for his services. That's a great load from my mind. The nurses and things can be managed somehow.

"Will you do this for the war?" I said. "When the war is over I or my husband will pay

you. Just at present we can't pay anybody anything."

"My *dear,*" he said. Oh! he is sweet.

More letters from Tommy. He is moving up to the front,—and I with him. He has been very lucky with his little experience to get into the thick of things at once. Lucky! Yes, I believe that. I know I've got to get this thing through my head once for all. It is a good thing to have my Tommy fighting over there. I sent him,—begrudgingly, but I sent him. I endure his being there for his sake and for the sake of ideas and feelings I hardly understand. I keep telling myself that I have done more than enough—more than I can endure. In my soul I have *not let him go* yet. I know that now, but it must be done.

In France, in Italy, in England they speed their men on their way. The women fight the war. Our women don't. They play at it like mother, or they make their sacrifices as I have made mine with something held back. It *is* our

war. What I am trying to do is to say that it is *my* war. It seems a funny time for me to be trying to fix this up in my mind, but you can't pick and choose times for such things. They come, and you can't dodge. Only *you* know when they come, whether belated or premature. It's just as Doctor Fitch says, you can't ever stop at a place and decide to call for help and comfort. You have to go on higher and yet higher. Tommy!

I had a very extraordinary psychological experience the other day. I never had one before. I have often guessed that Tommy has been thinking of me at a given moment, but it has only been guessing. I was sitting by the window looking down into the park and thinking of ordinary things like how much right I had to do knitting for Obadiah when I might be doing real soldier sweaters, and whether or not it would be bad for me to cut out wheat altogether, when some secret thing flashed and blinded me, and I knew Tommy was reading my letter about Obadiah. I knew he was sitting somewhere in the midst of his billets

and batteries and ammunition dumps that he writes about, and *reading about Obadiah.* I have never before thought you could know these things. I have heard that in telepathy you could establish spiritual communication with those you love,—and now I have. I wish such minutes could last.

I wonder what he thinks. Well, I rather know. He thinks in the first place that I am too young,—and what it would be if anything went wrong with me. He blames himself for marrying me, and then for going away and leaving me. He wants to see me and hold me in his arms, where I always tell him that I feel so certain that I am absolutely safe. And then over all of this—he is glad, and thinks that I am a sport and worthy to be the mother of his child, and he wouldn't have any of it any different. Even my sending him away without telling him.

It is a great thing to know how the other person's mind works when there is an ocean between you. If I didn't know how he was due to feel when he got that letter, there wouldn't have been

any letter. There wouldn't have been any me—for that matter. I should have gracefully expired of love and longing and weary leagues of briny hostile waters stretching between us.

I should feel a lot more comfortable in my mind if the Germans were not collecting dagoes at the rapid rate they are. The war has never looked worse, which is discouraging for me who have recently elected to fight it all by myself. The Italian drive isn't a drive, it's a walk-over. If the Italians are not flinging themselves into the embrace of the Prussians I don't know what is happening. If it weren't for General Byng—*Bing* by name and *Bing* by nature—and the success of the tanks on the Hindenburg line I think I should by now be doing the war maps up into nice little pellets and eating them.

The Bolsheviki have entered the Russian arena, to the disgust of Lester, who thinks they are autocratic and misinformed. I don't know what I think about them. I'm too busy to care what happens to Russia—if she doesn't make a separate peace. If she does I'm going down to

Greenwich Village and set fire to it. A woman army with bobbed hair—indeed!

Marcella Harcourt and I have had a talk. I've rather dodged Marcella for reasons connected with the cowardliness of my disposition, but I've been feeling so much holier lately that I sent for her and learned over again that easily forgotten lesson that we ought to brace up to our obligations however we have acquired them.

"I'm so glad, Beth," she said, referring to Obadiah.

"I'm glad you're glad, Marcella," I said. "Have a drink of malted milk," which was the innocuous fluid I was at that moment indulging in.

"No," she said, and began to cry. "I'll go away," she added hastily. "This will be bad for you. I was so sure I could control myself."

"Why should you?" I asked.

"Why shouldn't I?" she retorted.

"Oh, I'm all right," I said, "fit as a fiddle, though why a fiddle should be chosen for such a figure of speech I don't know, because they're

always out of order. Mine was when I played one."

"You're an extremely modest girl, Elizabeth," Marcella said. "You have so many accomplishments that one never even hears of."

"Nor me—any more," I said. "Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast, but I never make any."

"Nobody keeps up their practise now. I haven't heard any music for months."

"You don't think I could teach anything in the school you're at?" I said. "I mean, by and by."

"I don't think you are especially fitted for teaching, do you?" she said in pure astonishment.

"No, I don't," I said, "but I don't want to leave any avenue unturned. I think my talent lies more along the lines of street-car conducting."

"I saw a woman conductor on Broadway today," she said, "and she was one of the most charmingly pretty girls I have ever seen."

"I saw one yesterday," I said, "and she looked like a hippopotamus."

"They do vary," Marcella agreed.

"Marcella," I said, coming out with what was in my mind, "I don't see how you live at all."

"I get on better than you'd think," she said. "My nerves give out, but my spirit doesn't—often."

"Are you reconciled?" I said. "You seem to *care* what's happening in the world just the same."

"Don't you?" she said.

"Why, yes, but I—I haven't met with a loss."

Marcella looked at me a little pityingly. I could see what was in her mind, and I was very sorry for her. She thinks every one's fate is likely to be like hers. Poor dear! If she had married her man and then had lost him, her life would be harder yet.

"I am hurt," she said, "but I am not so unhappy as you think I am."

"How have you doped it out?" I said.

She smiled at me queerly.

"I am sustained," she said, "by the war itself. You wouldn't understand. I paraphrase Scripture

and say 'The war gives and the war takes away.' " She's English descent, that's why she talks like that.

"What has the war given you?" I asked incredulously.

"The opportunity to give—all I had," she said. "Oh! it isn't that Clay and I were really lovers, or that I sent him forth to fight. It's only that I've had a chance to share what's going on in the world by—by acquiescing in the common experience. If I held out against what's happened—oh! you couldn't understand."

"But I do," I said.

"If I refused to 'carry on,' I should die of the trouble in my heart, presently. If I accept it and go on fighting in spirit for what he was fighting for—then it's quite all right."

Poor Marcella can't even go across to the other side, for she has to make money by her teaching to support an invalid aunt in Canada. All she can do is to give all her spare time to war activities over here,—"doing her bit," she calls it, quite oblivious to the fact that those words

have become loathsomely obsolete the way I trust the expression *camouflage* is going to be in another month or two.

"Marcella," I said earnestly, "angels could do no more, nor 'Ladies from Hell' "—being Canadian she understood the allusion, of course— "in a front-line trench than you are doing and thinking and feeling. It's that kind of attitude among women and civilians that will win the war."

In my life, and I suppose in many others, the most trivial conditions and circumstances have a way of repeating themselves. The last time Marcella came to see me she was followed by the general appearance of the bunch, and this time they came in the same way the minute the door closed upon her. There were gaps where Roland and Peter Ives had been, and also Eileen, but Rob came and my delightful sister by marriage failed to cast her enveloping shadow over the proceedings, but otherwise it was just the same.

Billy Douglas was wearing the only really good-looking tailored suit I have seen since the

war broke out—six dollars and a half a yard,—taupe in color, and Dolly Grainger was done up in the Salvation Army style of outdoor clothing that she affects. Her favorite song being "They never proceed to follow that light, but they always follow me," out of the recent revival of *The Belle of New York,* where she got the idea of this demure dressing. Every one who doesn't know her likes her in them. She was carrying a fifty dollar knitting bag, but the knitting in it wasn't so important, being a sweater for herself.

Lester brought his pussy-footed friend with him. We had a tea parade to the kitchen. We've had to let Bessie go, so I mostly make the tea myself. Everything in the trenches is *parades* according to Tommy; the men have to line up and have them for everything they do, baths and all, eternally, like fire drills in school, you know.

"I'm going for my examination to-morrow," Pussy-foot said when the object of our expedition was accomplished, and we had tea spread before us.

"I should think you'd be ashamed, Lester," Billy Douglas said, scrunching her lemon against the side of her cup.

"I'm not," Lester said defiantly. "I'll show you that I'm not, later."

"It takes a braver man to resist the draft than it does to accept it, doesn't it, Lester?" Rob Douglas inquired.

"It may," Lester said modestly.

"The French morale is getting terribly weakened," Dolly chimed in. "Everybody wants peace except the English, really."

"I don't think that is true," Lester said.

"Oh! it is. Nobody can hold out for another winter except the Germans. All the statistics show that."

"What would you suggest then?" Rob inquired satirically. "Letting the Germans have it all their own way?"

"They are doing that anyway," Dolly said. "Look at the Italian situation."

"I am not so sure."

"They say that the men at our own camps are

positively suffering from privations and mismanagement. The amount of graft going on is simply stupendous, you know."

There was a chorus of low growls.

"You'd better not go around talking like that," Rob said. "Those aren't specially popular sentiments with good citizens, nowadays. Besides they are gross exaggerations of the facts."

"You can't talk," flashed back Dolly; "you aren't in a position to criticize the people who are criticizing the government. You belong to the Slacker regiment, anyway."

"Not any longer, Dolly," Billy contributed, "he's in. This is the last time you'll see him in civilian attire."

"Billy!" we all exclaimed.

"I couldn't stand the strain," she said, "all the pretty uniforms and he not in one. Of course, it was bound to come anyway."

Rob looked at her with the adoring look of one who is at last understood by those whom he cherishes. It was bound to come, of course, but something tells me that Billy got in line of her

own accord notwithstanding. That doesn't mean that she won't be the most harum-scarum kind of a grass war-widow, but it does mean she's joined the fraternity of those who lay their voluntary sacrifices on the altar.

We talked on endlessly. Lester lingered a little after every one had gone, but about all he did was to take my hand and kiss it, and say I looked unearthy.

"You mean unearthly, don't you, Lester?" I said.

"It doesn't make any difference what I mean," he said. "Oh! isn't there anything I can do for you?"

"Get into this war before you are kicked in."

"I will," he said.

"*Right,*" I said. "Not because of me."

"You make it terribly hard," he groaned.

"I want to," I said.

"They tell me," he said, "that women sometimes—suffer awfully."

"They tell me," I said, "that men who resist the draft suffer more, from various causes."

"I love you, Elizabeth," he groaned.

"Now see here, Lester," I said, "I love you in a kind of way. Enough so you're distressing me to death."

Which of course made him groan the harder.

"Come here," I said, "and kiss my forehead. Tommy won't mind at all, but don't tell me that you love me any more than you can help. You know as well as I do that we oughtn't to say those things." I said *we* not to appear to be too severe about it.

After every one had gone and I was in my bed some of the conversation we had had came back to me. I had hardly noticed it at the time, but Pussy-foot had asked Rob Douglas in some connection or other how Americans were notified when any of their relatives were killed in France, and Rob had said, "By cable from the War Department," which I knew already, of course. Then he said:

"I suppose the next of kin of the first Americans to be victims will be interviewed by our enterprising yellow journals."

I crawled out of my bed and knocked on my father's door, but he was sleeping and did not hear me.

At breakfast the next morning father came in and stood by my chair the same way that he had done in my dream. In his hand was the cable I dreamed I received. His face was terrible.

"It's all right, father," I said, "I dreamed it all out. The cable says November fifteenth. I've got a letter in my hand from him dated the seventeenth. I dreamed all this, and he wasn't dead in my dream."

Later: *They verified it. It was November twentieth that he died.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEW YEAR

I HAVE not screamed yet. When you meet with a shock of great trouble the first thing you want to do is to scream and to keep on screaming, but on account of Obadiah I ought not to. When he comes I can. I shall scream before I die. Of course, I expect to die. To all intents and purposes I am dead already. A woman is, when her husband dies.

Tommy was killed by shell fire. He never got to the front-of-the-front, that he was always writing about. He was just walking along and a stray shell exploded near him, and killed him. It seems such a matter-of-fact thing. It might happen to anybody, they tell me. It did happen to Tommy. I wish he had gone "Over the Top" into "No Man's Land" once, so he might have known that he had done it. Well,

he is in "No Man's Land" now, and soon I shall be with him. I know there is a Somewhere Beyond that we can go to together. I didn't know before. I said my prayers doubtfully, wondering just who I was talking to, and why. "God, if there be a God," I said. There is a God. He has not been very kind to me, but He's there, and He has a Heaven somewhere. Even if it's only a dim sort of a rest-room where people can lie down and die again in comparative peace. I certainly want to get out of this world. I have borne more than I can here.

Great trouble is different from anything you imagine it, though. You think of it as unthinkable and all wrong, but it is rather natural than anything else. It is the end of you, perhaps, but it isn't the end of everything. I have never been able to think of the crucifixion from any angle, I found it so distressing. Now I understand it better. Christ was glad to die, and He could get through it somehow, *though* they crucified Him.

The worst thing is the way the world swirls on around you, leaving you in a little island of

anguish alone in the middle of it, but without being able to get away. I sit still in my black dress and people go on living and talking and even laughing all about me. I laugh, too, when I can, because it isn't a good idea to spread your trouble about you in times like these; but it comes from a long distance. Everything comes from a long distance that one does or says, but the people who haven't had trouble talk off the surface. I used to. It is natural to.

I have to comfort my friends who are suffering for me, of course. Poor Lester is in a terrible state of mind, and Marcella. I try not to see Marcella. She thinks our trouble should bring us nearer together, but it only brings her nearer me. Poor girl! Poor girl!

Father has been kicked out of his firm by his two partners. I never thought they were any good, either of them, though father swore by them. He has taken a position in a broker's office, and auntie has paid the rent of our apartment for a year, and given mother a sum of money. My father certainly needs me. He is

the only thing I really regret leaving, or feel guilty about. The others can manage. Poor mother has suffered for me, but she is already beginning to hope that I will start life again on the same old basis, and bring her—luck.

Lester looks a good deal older and thinner.

"I don't believe you are eating enough, Lester," I said.

"How can I?" he said.

"I am," I said to encourage him.

"After you—after you—when you need it, will you let me help?" he begged.

"Lester," I said, "these things don't change the course of things. Trouble only means you must go on living the same way, and meet the same obligations better, if you can."

"What are you going to do?" he said.

"Nothing."

"You'll have to do something. You'll have another to—support."

"That's all that worries me," I said. "But I think mother will be fine for a boy. Better perhaps than she was for a girl."

"You'll be able to have your way with him—her—it, I suppose!"

"Him."

"But how can you tell?"

"I know."

"You can't know, can you?"

"You *can't,* but I do."

"Shall I be allowed to do something for him?"

"Lester," I said, "now don't say anything or work yourself up in any way, but *if—if* anything happens to me and you still want to and it can be arranged you can settle some money on him."

"Thank you," Lester said, trembling. "Must you put it that way—*if—if—*"

"Yes, I must," I said.

He quivered, but braced up after a while.

"If it's the other sex—" he said, "may I be permitted just the same?"

"It won't be, but you may," I said.

"If anything happens to you," he said, "something will happen to me, too."

"No, Lester," I said firmly. "You mustn't

feel that way. If you died just because I did I should never have any respect for you again."

"I shouldn't kill myself," he said, "I just couldn't live."

"Yes, you could, Lester," I said, "one can always live."

I can't, of course, but any one else can by just exerting a little more will power. I shall be sorry to leave Lester. I think some women could make quite a boy out of him.

I didn't notice what was going on in the world for a while. I didn't pay any attention to my war, but when I began to I was glad to see everything looking brighter. The Bolsheviki are perhaps not going to make a separate peace. This may be because Germany doesn't want them to. For one thing Russia is full of socialists and anarchists, and if they overflow into Germany their propaganda, which is deadly serious and very much believed by all of them, might do a great harm to the Prussian ideals and deplete even more their flagging faith in their

ruler's iron hand. For another thing Germany may not want that move to be made in the game, just at present. I wouldn't trust them, and father says he wouldn't either. On the other fronts things look better.

One thing that brought me out of my trouble was the suffering of the poor during the extreme cold weather we have been having. The New Year came in with weather twenty below zero, and a coal famine. There were days we didn't have any fire in our building except a grate fire, and our gas pipes froze so we couldn't cook on the range. There hasn't been anything like the actual cold in New York for years. The poor people stood for hours in the coal line to get a little sack full of the precious mineral that they could carry home on their backs. At first, it seemed more than I could bear, and then I began to get interested in what Lester and his mother were doing. They just bought up blankets and warm clothing and distributed them with a little money to the people in these lines. Lester says that he believes only in organized charity, but

as I pointed out to him, you can't organize dire extremity of this sort.

I felt at first as if I ought not to have all these additional things to endure, but I got to see that there couldn't be any special dispensation for me, who am only one of the suffering people in the world. I can not go very deeply into causes and effects just now, but I am not in any state of rebellion. I would not have things any different, except a few of my last letters to Tommy. I didn't put any kisses in the very last letters that went to him. I didn't say I loved him. I was afraid of the censor. I wake in the night shivering and shivering to think of these omissions. *Did* he notice them? Did he say in his heart, "This letter is not so nice as the letter before last. Maybe she is getting reconciled to our parting?" Did he turn a page where it was marked "Over" and just find some trivial little thing about my new sports stockings or father's growing balder, when he was looking for a love message?

"If only I hadn't let him go," was all I could

think of at first, but I see now he had to go. He wanted to go. He would not have been satisfied if he hadn't! Besides, other men go. When he went I did not think he could be killed, and so I was willing that he should take his charmed life over there among the others whose lives were not charmed. I was willing that they should be killed and not he. Now I have had to have him killed. He is just one of the rest, and he always was. That lesson I have had to learn. That he and I are like the others—only more unfortunate than some of them, so far. Well, I say to myself, what is the meaning of it? Sacrifice—and what is that? *C'est la guerre!* If the war had to be, all these things had to be. Tommy had to die. I had to bear it. It was our war. Just as Obadiah is going to be our child.

It will be funny not to be in the world at all. I am so used to it now. Not to wake in the morning and see the window-pane frosted over and breathe in deep breaths of morning air. Not to get into my blue mules and slam the window down. Not to smell the crisp smell of breakfast

toast. Not to look down into the park or see any more sunsets, or ever get on a horse again.

I wonder what Obadiah will be like. Perhaps I shan't die until I have really had a look at him. Little new babies don't vary much. I can't tell whether he looks like Tommy or not because he won't look like anybody at first. I never expected Tommy to be here to greet him. I shall try to pretend for those first minutes that he is here. Maybe he will be. He may come to get me.

I thought last night he was standing in the hall. There was a place there just where the jog comes that I kept feeling was the focus of something. I can't explain it, but it was like a light that you can't see, concentrated on one spot. Like a presence trying to be a presence. I kept feeling drawn to it, and yet I could not move toward it. It might have been some part of Tommy trying to get itself expressed. I don't know what it was, but it comforted me.

Doctor Fitch has appeared. Also the nurse.

They tell me that I must not be afraid. What have I to be afraid of?—I keep laughing at them to show them that they need not be afraid for me. Poor mother is unhappy and keeps saying that it ought not to be so hard for women to bear children. Why shouldn't it be hard? Is any part of life easy? If I have lived a minute after I knew that I had no longer a husband in the world can't I live through bringing my child into it?

I have been out of the room and taken father in my arms.

"Daddy, dear," I said, "please don't mind. I don't mind the suffering."

"You don't know what it is."

I don't know what it is, but I do know that whatever it is it is going to be a relief. It's just going to be a physical fight. When any one has borne the other thing as long as I have it helps to have a struggle on that has nothing to do with the mind. Tommy died instantly, I am glad to say. He didn't have to know he was dying or to suffer. He hated physical pain much worse than I do.

All kinds of funny things keep coming into my mind, though. There is that story the girls always told with a lisp at school about "the tall dark stranger coming near-wer and near-wer and near-wer." Obadiah is coming "near-wer and near-wer" all the time. So also is the dreadful deadly pain.

Doctor Fitch and the nurse talk me over quite technically. The nurse has outstanding teeth like tombstones.

"I don't like you," I said to her quite suddenly, "are there any more at home like you?" I don't understand what made me say such a thing.

She looked at me quietly with tears in her eyes.

"I'll go away," she said, "and Doctor Fitch will send you some one you like better."

"Oh! I do like you now," I said. "I hadn't seen what nice eyes you have. I am inclined to be unreasonable."

"Be as unreasonable as you like, my lamb," she said.

"Did you know my husband died?" I said to her. "Curious, wasn't it?"

Every one cries so much. I can't understand it.

Doctor Fitch keeps me walking and walking all over the house.

I don't think I can walk any longer.

I will, if I must.

I think I am near death now. It will be nice and alleviating to die.

Tommy! Tommy! Tommy!

CHAPTER XV

OBADIAH

I CAME to with a jolt in time to hear a woman shrieking—who turned out to be myself. Doctor Fitch bent over me soothingly.

"I didn't die," I said, "but I shall soon."

"You are not going to die," he said.

"But I want to," I said.

"No."

"Yes."

Later I begged him, "Please."

"You won't want to when you see your baby."

"Hello, Obadiah!" I said, when that young gentleman appeared. He welcomed me with a sweet sneeze. He looked like a fat old gentleman in a way, and in another way he looked like nobody but my own baby. "Give him to me," I said.

It is very remarkable to have your baby in your arms for the first time.

"Tommy," I said, "this is our baby."

Doctor Fitch cries more than I have ever imagined a doctor could, but I was too weak to explain to him that I was not delirious, only pretending. I was delirious, of course, during the last part of the proceedings.

"Do you want to see your mother?" I didn't especially but I said that I would be pleased to.

"I am a mother," I said, "isn't it funny, Doctor Fitch?"

Father and mother and Mother Richardson came in on tiptoe. They were a washed-out-looking bunch. I didn't blame Obadiah for snuggling down close to me and refusing to be interested in them.

"Show him to Father Richardson," I said. "Tell him that he is Thomas third." Queer what things you can and can't say without crying.

They let Lester come to see me when Obadiah was a week old. He was in a khaki uniform.

"Why, Lester!" I said.

"I've been converted," he said.

"Who converted you?"

"You did," he blurted out. "I thought if you could lose your husband and have this baby and live—all for the war, that I could give it all I've got, which is only myself after all."

"Good boy," I said.

"That time you said to me that one could always live I got to thinking. I thought if you could say so I could. Then I went over the facts about this war, and I gradually changed my ideals. After all, it's a big thing to give your life for democracy, even though you may be mistaken in so doing."

"But it isn't being mistaken, Lester," I said; "the war is a thing we've got to get through with before we can ever be safe and comfortable again. Tommy said it was God and the devil fighting for supremacy. It is our duty to throw our strength into it, on the right side."

"If you can *live* at all, I can fight for the thing you're living for," Lester said positively.

"The point is, Lester," I confessed after a pause, "that I wasn't going to live. I was going to die."

"Well," Lester said after digesting this, "it makes a great difference to me that you changed your mind."

"But don't you go thinking that I had the spunk to go on with. For quite a while I didn't have it."

"What changed you?"

"Obadiah," I said briefly.

"Are you so fond of him?"

"It isn't altogether that."

"What is it then?"

"I want to raise my boy to be a soldier," I said.

I can't get my Tommy over here until after the war the government has decided. That's another reason for me to live. Also, I got a belated letter from him about Obadiah, dated the day before he died. He isn't dead in the way I thought he was. The man who could

write that letter isn't dead. He isn't even away. He is here by my side. He was in every breath I drew, and he is still breathing through me.

Always, always after I have forgotten the little ways he looked and the little words he spoke—I have forgotten some of them already in spite of the agonized way I try to hold on to them in my mind,—the real essence of him will be surviving as a part of me and of our child. There is no death.

I *am* going to raise Obadiah to be a soldier.

THE END